A MINISTRY MODEL FOR SHAPING FUTURE LEADERS WITHIN THE SOUTHERN MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH

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ABSTRACT

A MINISTRY MODEL FOR SHAPING FUTURE LEADERS
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by
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United Theological Seminary, 2025

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Without a clear leadership succession model, including development and training, a church risks instability, disrupted transitions, and hindered progress toward its mission and goals. This type of model is absent in the Southern Missionary Baptist Church. The hypothesis statement is that if participants engage in a six-week training seminar about leadership succession, they will be equipped to develop a succession plan. A qualitative analysis using pre- and post-surveys, questionnaires, group discussions, journaling, fieldwork, interviews, and small groups showed that participants recognized the need for succession planning and felt prepared to implement it.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, I am incredibly grateful to God, whose grace, wisdom, mercy, and faithfulness have sustained me throughout this journey. Without His guidance and strength, this work would not have been possible. Secondly, I honor my parents, my brother, and the vast extended family members who have been my greatest supporters during this process and continue to rally around me in all my endeavors. Also, to my sons, I pray that you use this accomplishment to fuel your faith in that all things with God are possible. I also want to thank the numerous people of faith, the countless pastors, teachers, and organizations that allowed me to grow and develop my gifts for the benefit of the Kingdom.

To my mentors, Dr. William Curtis, Dr. Lance Watson, Sr., and my faculty consultant, Dr. Yvette Martin, for their invaluable guidance, encouragement, and unwavering support. To my cohort members and colleagues, especially Lorenzo, Carl, Ebony, and Terrance, thank you for your friendship, prayers, and insightful discussions. Your companionship on this journey has been both enriching and encouraging. We made a pact to finish together, and we did just that. We will always be family.

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I am also deeply appreciative of my Southern Missionary Baptist Church church family who continually uplifted me in prayer and gave me the space to explore and implement the concepts discussed here. Your support and faith have been a constant source of encouragement.

Lastly, I am deeply grateful to all those who contributed to the completion of this project, whether through prayers, encouragement, or practical support. May this work bring glory to God and serve as a tool for equipping others in ministry.

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to the late Rev. James E. Milton, who had the foresight and the faith to see the potential within my person and choose me to be an individual who could be trusted to carry the leadership mantle. The seeds of leadership you planted in me have now flourished into a ministry that reflects the core values that will lead to a legacy of leadership succession to com

ABBREVIATIONS

LSP	Leadership Succession Plan
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version

A leader's lasting value is measured by succession,

—John C. Maxwell, *21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership*

INTRODUCTION

A growing problem that many churches are facing is a leadership succession plan to secure their structural and spiritual integrity for future generations. The Southern Missionary Baptist Church in Cincinnati, Ohio, is no exception. This project is the necessary spark for a six-week series of training seminars created to raise awareness of the need for such a leadership succession model to be considered to provide current leadership with an intentional, detailed plan to pass on to future leaders.

Chapter One, Ministry Focus, centers on me as a young man selected and trained by strong pastoral mentors and teachers to receive the leadership mantle. It describes the benefits of this intentional grooming and the devastating adverse effects when it is not. It also discusses the challenges of remaining faithful in an ever-changing leadership environment, the joys of the learning forums, and the positive impact on the church, as well as the heartbreaking and disappointing consequences when we are negligent and lose sight of creating a pipeline of next-generation leaders.

Chapter Two, Biblical Foundations, examines Numbers 27:12-23 to reinforce that biblical models support intentionality concerning leadership succession, training, and preparation for the next generation to be successful in future ministry. Moses passes the leadership mantle to Joshua. God instructs Moses to climb Mount Abarim to see the land He gives to the Israelites. Moses is told that although he will see the land, he will not enter it because of his disobedience at the waters of Meribah. Moses is then commanded

to appoint Joshua as his successor to lead the Israelites into the Promised Land. This passage provides a successful biblical blueprint for making appointments based on the competency and character of the future leaders. It outlines the necessity of seasoned leaders partnering with younger leaders, training them, and equipping them by providing real-life situations to work through. It highlights the public appointment of the successor to provide continuity and ensure smooth transitions. Israel was ready to conquer the land because Moses willingly and intentionally passed the leadership mantle before his death.

Chapter Three, Historical Foundations, analyzes key historical figures in the Black Church. It provides historical evidence and models that support intentionality concerning leadership succession, training, and preparation for the next generation to be successful in future ministry. This is inclusive but not limited to the persons who held the leadership mantle and those who received it and continued. The historical context and overview share the history of the Black Church. It outlines those who were in leadership and how they shaped and developed the Black Church. It also contains those who held the leadership mantle and those who picked it up. It unpacks the successes, failures, opportunities, and the challenges those leaders faced and overcame to maintain a healthy Black Church movement.

Chapter Four, Theological Foundations, investigates the theological perspective of Ecclesiology. It will also focus on the theological sub-perspectives of the nature of the Church, Ordination, and Discipleship. It will compare how multiple theologies address these sub-perspectives, as well as provide key information and methodologies that the Church should utilize when selecting and training future leaders. It will also explore

Jesus' training of the twelve. These theological views will solidify a strong cornerstone and foundation for existing church leaders to build upon.

Chapter Five, Interdisciplinary Foundations, marks the Education and Leadership Development area. The primary content is to look at the leadership training, development, and deployment model that Jack Walsh created and utilized when he was the CEO of General Electric. His model is the substance of leadership legend in corporate America. It will provide essential building blocks from his book, "Winning". It will then examine how others have assessed his model and its incredible effectiveness. An exciting fact is that most of the existing CEOs of the largest corporations in America are individuals who got their leadership start in General Electric under Jack Walsh. When applied to the church's leadership succession plan, this interdisciplinary perspective will fuel the faith. The content supports the initial contexts found in Numbers 27:12-23 when Moses appoints and anoints Joshua as successor.

Chapter Six, the final chapter, unveils the Project Analysis, which records and interprets the data that was acquired during the six-week seminar and training sessions. The analysis covers the subject matter, ranging from "What is a Succession Plan and Why is it Necessary" to "Assessing Potential Talent" to "Leadership Reproduction". The chapter also includes the following: 1) the Methodology, which capsulates the tools used to capture data; 2) means of Implementation, which provides how the project was structured, demographics of participants, and expertise of presenters; 3) Summary of Learning, which provides evidence of the project bearing out the hypothesis; and 4) the Conclusion, which details the next steps based upon this research.

CHAPTER ONE

MINISTRY FOCUS

Introduction

Thomas S. Monson, the former president of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, said, "Remember that the mantle of leadership is not the cloak of comfort, but the robe of responsibility. Accountability is not for the intention but for the deed. You must continue to choose the harder right, instead of the easier wrong."[1] The twenty-first-century church faces a powerful adversary that has slowly infiltrated its administrative structure and threatens to leave future generations unprepared and ill-equipped to effectively train and lead their prospective members. In my opinion, leaders are unwilling to pass on ministry leadership mantles. Therefore, leaders maintain their traditions and control of the organization at the church's expense.

If unchecked, poor leadership will lead to an unhealthy church. These symptoms/signs include but are not limited to the following:

- A lack of disciple making
- Resistance to change
- Stunted spiritual maturity

[1] Thomas S. Monson, "Three Gates Only You Can Open," https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/new-era/2008/08/three-gates-only-you-can-open?lang=eng.

- Desiring affirmation from people instead of God
- Preference driven instead of purpose driven
- An unhealthy prayer culture
- Attendance that is consistently decreasing
- Aging congregations
- A decline in the duty to serve others,
- Noticeable absence in community involvement
- Fewer baptisms
- A decrease in giving
- Inward focused budgeting versus outward budgeting
- An overall lack of vision and innovation.

The danger of becoming preoccupied with its status, preferences, and tradition will lead to its own death.

A lack of discipleship may mean that current leadership is failing to carry out the Great Commission. In my opinion, the Bible clearly mandates the church's mission in Matthew 28:18-20, which states, "And Jesus came and said to them, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.'"[2] Leadership must pass this core value to the next generation. If a church is not investing in the next generation of believers, then the

[2] Matthew 28:18-20, NRSV, unless noted otherwise, all bible citations are from the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible.

current leadership is failing to make disciples. Many people grow up in church, but that does not mean that their relationship with God is growing. Young people need guidance to navigate their life's struggles. Beyond that, people who are new to the church need that guidance on a different level. Failure to do so will cause younger members to go to other places and/or churches that will give them what they need. If the local church is unwilling to change by making its leadership younger, then it will fail to establish to create a living legacy. Change is uncomfortable but necessary.

This also means that the current leadership is suffering from stunted spiritual maturity. Human growth and development support that self-centered behavior or selfishness falls in the childhood stage.[3] Holding on to positions and offices of service prevents leaders from reaching their full maturity. The Apostle Paul, in 1 Corinthians 3:1-3, admonishes the Corinthian believers when he says, "And so, brothers and sisters, I could not speak to you as spiritual people, but rather as people of the flesh, as infants in Christ. I fed you with milk, not solid food, for you were not ready for solid food. Even now you are still not ready, for you are still of the flesh. For as long as there is jealousy and quarreling among you, are you not of the flesh, and behaving according to human inclinations?" Spiritual immaturity results in current leadership seeking affirmation from people instead of God. When this attitude is present, ulterior motives suppress and stifle the development of the next generation.

Leaders who live to please other people become myopic and manipulative, leading to longer tenures in key leadership roles, forcing younger generations to reach

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[3] Allina Health, "Helping Kids Move From Selfish to Selfless," https://www.allinahealth.org/healthysetgo/thrive/helping-kids-move-from-selfish-to-selfless.

their potential by developing roles that are intended for them to experience sooner rather than later. When the priority of making and marking disciples becomes preference-driven instead of purpose-driven, future generations are cut off from fulfilling the church's longevity and legacy. When the leadership mantle and core Christian values are not imparted to the next generation because leadership is preference-driven, it creates an unhealthy prayer culture. The next generation will not seek God's guidance but rather continue the cycle of pleasing people. Proverbs 22:6 dictates to "Train children in the right way, and when old, they will not stray," as a means of ensuring the church's longevity.

Therefore, to survive the twenty-first century and beyond, church leadership must embrace, equip, encourage, and educate younger individuals for current church ministries, positions, and offices. Doing so ensures the aging congregation's confidence that the church's future is in good hands. Although COVID-19 has been used as a major factor in the church's present decline, this problem was present pre-COVID and will continue to plague the church in this post-COVID era if the leadership mantles are not placed in the hands of younger people now.

Context: The Southern Missionary Baptist Church

Southern Missionary Baptist Church in Cincinnati, Ohio, is the context for exploration as I seek to understand the relationship between effective leadership and the vibrancy and longevity of a local church. The church is 105 years old and sits in the heart of Avondale. The church has a primarily African American membership. Historically, it is often called the flagship church and the pillar of the community, which also has more

than twenty-three other churches in it. At one time in its history, the church would have been considered a mega ministry (3000 members or more) during the eighties, but it is now a shadow of its former glory.

Demographic

Southern Missionary Baptist Church is in the city of Cincinnati, which sits in Brown, Clermont and Hamilton Counties. The city is also the county seat of Hamilton County. The U.S. Census Bureau in 2023 reported there were 313, 028 in the city, which is the third largest city in Ohio.[4] The average household income in Cincinnati is $65,213 with a poverty rate of 28.65 percent. Prior to 2023, Cincinnati had been steadily declining in population. The city was founded in 1788. The original surveyor of the area, John Filson, named the settlement Losantiville, which combines four terms from different languages to mean "the town opposite the mouth of the Licking River."[5] Arthur St. Clair agreed to rename the city Cincinnati in honor the Society of the Cincinnati, which honored General George Washington, who was considered a latter-day Cincinnatus. Cincinnati was a major boomtown in the heart of the United States for the early part of the nineteenth century, but by the end century, as the country moved to from steamboats

[4] World Population Review, "Cincinnati, Ohio Population, 2024," https://worldpopulationreview.com/us-cities/ohio/cincinnati.

[5] World Population Review, "Cincinnati, Ohio Population, 2024."

to railroads, the city was surpassed in importance and population by other nearby cities like Chicago.

Cincinnati has historically been predominantly white accounting for 8 percent of the population.[6] Cincinnati has dealt with strained race relations for much of its history. Due to its location on the Ohio River, the city was a border town between Kentucky, a slave state, and Ohio, with many residents playing a role in abolitionism. Many fugitives also crossed at Cincinnati to escape North, and it had several stations on the Underground Railroad. Today the city is the home of the Freedom Center which features the Underground Railroad movement. There have also been many race riots in Cincinnati. The earliest occurred in 1829 when a riot broke out as anti-abolitionists attacked blacks in the city, with other riots happening in 1836 and 1841. One of the most recent racially charged riots occurred in 2001 when police shot and killed a Black man during a foot pursuit.[7]

Racial agitation again reared its head with the case of a university officer named Ray Tensing and his actions in the death of Samuel DuBose, which lead to some protests and two mistrials in court as juries became deadlocked and could not reach an agreement.[8] Although the city, has hailed great civil rights pastor such as the late Rev. Fred Shuttlesworth and others, the city is not recognized as a "church town" as it applies to the black community. Over time, the church movement has moved from its initial

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[6] World Population Review, "Cincinnati, Ohio Population, 2024."

[7] World Population Review, "Cincinnati, Ohio Population, 2024."

[8] World Population Review, "Cincinnati, Ohio Population, 2024."

outreach mission to mainly be concerned with its own inward preferences and very little is done proactively to address the needs of the growing black population. The most recent racial composition of Cincinnati is as follows:

- White (50.33%)
- Black or African American (41.37%)
- Two or more races (4.58%)
- Asian (2.19%)
- Other races (1.42%)
- Native American (.07%) and
- Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander (.05%)[9]

Geographic

Southern Missionary Baptist Church lies in the heart of Avondale, which was originally a distinctive suburban village. “In 1795, Samuel Robinson purchased most of this land from John Cleves Symmes. Later, a number of men bought tracts of Robinson’s property, primarily for speculation. In the 1830s, a few Cincinnati businessmen-built homes here and began commuting to their jobs in the city. Avondale landholders began dividing their large holdings for purchase by wealthy Cincinnatians who wanted suburban residences.”[10]

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[9] World Population Review, “Cincinnati, Ohio Population, 2024.”

[10] “History of Avondale,” https://web.archive.org/web/20230326080307/https://www.avondalecommunitycouncil.com/history-of-avondale.

"Within a few years, Cincinnati merchants and manufacturers were moving into large houses on spacious Avondale lots, just as others of their class were doing in Clifton, Mt. Auburn, and Walnut Hills. Among those who chose to live here were ironworks owners Miles Greenwood (1807-1885) and Stephen Burton (1816-1884). The Burton family claims that in 1853, Mrs. Burton saw a resemblance between the stream behind her house and the Avon River in England and began to call the district Avondale. When the village became incorporated in 1864, that name became permanent for the entire community."[11]

"For most of the nineteenth century, Protestants, who were mostly English and German merchants heavily populated Avondale. A small number were middle or lower income, including the 8 to 10 percent who were black. After streetcar lines were installed in 1903, less affluent Cincinnatians gained access to the village. From the 1920s until the end of World War II, 60 percent of the suburb's population was Jewish. It was the home of a variety of Jewish institutions, synagogues, and businesses."[12]

"After World War II, the character of Avondale again changed. Many younger residents took advantage of reasonable mortgage rates to buy more modern homes in newer suburbs. Older people also moved away as the large homes became too difficult for them to maintain. Middle-income black families often replaced the departing residents. They were willing to pay the inflated prices asked of non-white buyers because

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[11] "History of Avondale," https://web.archive.org/web/20230326080307/https://www.avondalecommunitycouncil.com/history-of-avondale.

[12] "History of Avondale," https://web.archive.org/web/20230326080307/https://www.avondalecommunitycouncil.com/history-of-avondale.

Avondale was one of the few "decent" neighborhoods open to them. According to the practices followed by Cincinnati realtors at that time, Blacks could only move into neighborhoods where Blacks already lived. Since the mid-nineteenth century Black residents lived in Avondale."[13]

"As the number of Black residents increased, some white homeowners panicked and fled, a process that opportunistic realtors encouraged by block busting-buying one house on an all-white street at an often-excessive price and then selling it to a black family. Some realtors also engaged in a campaign of anonymous letters and phone calls to white residents, warning them that blacks were about to move onto their block and advising them to sell their homes quickly. Property values soon fell, making Avondale housing accessible to the less affluent, including many black families displaced by urban renewal in the West End. At the same time, the Cincinnati Department of Relocation settled almost 220 black families in Avondale. Large houses were divided-usually illegally-into multi-family dwellings. By 1959, the southern portion of Avondale, once mostly Jewish, had become predominantly black. As Jewish institutions followed their constituents to the newer suburbs, empty schools and temples were turned over to the recently arrived residents."[14]

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[13] "History of Avondale," https://web.archive.org/web/20230326080307/https://www.avondalecommunitycouncil.com/history-of-avondale.

[14] "History of Avondale," https://web.archive.org/web/20230326080307/https://www.avondalecommunitycouncil.com/history-of-avondale.

"North and South Avondale became increasingly distinct and separate neighborhoods. While the residents of North Avondale were able to maintain the value of their property and the character of their streets, South Avondale became known for its rising crime rate, falling land values, and deteriorating housing. Absentee landlords neglected their properties; tenants often abused the buildings. By 1956 city planners had identified South Avondale as blighted and in need of rehabilitation. Rehabilitation did little for South Avondale. Work done between 1965 and 1975 benefited institutions such as the University of Cincinnati and nearby hospitals, not the residents. The city had promised improved housing. In fact, widespread demolition for street improvements, parking, and institutional expansion reduced housing stock."[15]

"The frustration caused by the massive West End clearance and the city's failure to fulfill its promises fueled anger and resentment among South Avondale's black residents. Between 1967-1970, a series of riots and firebombings damaged many of South Avondale's commercial and institutional buildings and drove out most of the remaining white business. The city responded with a second renewal plan which emphasized the creation of a "town center" business area with a shopping mall at Reading Road and Rockdale Avenue where the riots had done the most damage. This plan was periodically revised and scaled down until basketball star turned developer Oscar Robertson completed a more modest form of the project in 1983."[16]

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[15] "History of Avondale," https://web.archive.org/web/20230326080307/https://www.avondalecommunitycouncil.com/history-of-avondale.

[16] "History of Avondale," https://web.archive.org/web/20230326080307/https://www.avondalecommunitycouncil.com/history-of-avondale.

"Rejuvenation was extremely slow and uneven, and much of the responsibility for further improvement passed largely into the hands of community groups, private developers, and individual residents. The Avondale Redevelopment Corporation (ARC) was established in 1980 from the Avondale Community Council's Housing Development Committee. ARC is charged with revitalizing the Avondale community's residential and commercial base by stabilizing and upgrading the existing business districts and housing stock."[17]

"ARC was instrumental in the development of the Avondale Town Center, the Greater Cincinnati Urban League Office Building and Truth Hardware (currently Lexington Market). ARC increased the quality of housing stock in Avondale by building Reading Green Condo's (Reading and Prospect), Harvey Point Townhomes (Glenwood and Harvey Avenues), Cedar Meadows, and Avonview Apartments (a 50-unit senior building located on Reading Road). In autumn 2003, representatives of LISC and the Avondale Community Council approached Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center, The Health Alliance, and the Cincinnati Zoo & Botanical Gardens to request their support for a redevelopment initiative along Burnet Avenue. Later that fall, representatives from the three institutions held a meeting with members of the

[17] "History of Avondale," https://web.archive.org/web/20230326080307/https://www.avondalecommunitycouncil.com/history-of-avondale.

community to discuss the role institutional stakeholders could play in revitalization effort."[18]

"At a subsequent meeting, the community and institutions began considering how to move the effort from idea to reality. The acknowledgement that several past revitalization efforts had failed led the participants to conclude that a successful effort would require a more inclusive and integrated process than had been tried before, and that it would need to be led by a broad-based entity. The "Revitalization Team" would need a structure that gave institutional and non-institutional stakeholders equal voices in shaping a plan and strategy. The goal would be to seat Uptown Institutions, the Avondale Community Council, Avondale Business Association, homeowners, and the City of Cincinnati at one table to work collaboratively and comprehensively on revitalizing Burnet Avenue."[19] Currently, Avondale is "85% African American but is now being gentrification due to the continued growth of Xavier University and the expansion of Children's hospital. Southern Baptist was initially a Jewish Synagogue that was prominent in the area before their relocation to the Roselawn/ Amberly Village area."[20]

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[18] "History of Avondale," https://web.archive.org/web/20230326080307/https://www.avondalecommunitycouncil.com/history-of-avondale.

[19] "History of Avondale," https://web.archive.org/web/20230326080307/https://www.avondalecommunitycouncil.com/history-of-avondale.

[20] "History of Avondale," https://web.archive.org/web/20230326080307/https://www.avondalecommunitycouncil.com/history-of-avondale.

Historical

Southern Missionary Baptist Church began in 1917 as a Sunday School mission in the home of Deacon S. C. Carter and his wife. The church relocated to 562 George Street.[21] The church's name grew out of the initial members being from southern states like Alabama, Georgia, and Mississippi. Rev. J. S. Tate served for five years. His notable achievements include relocating the church into it a new edifice at 701 Richmond Street. According to the church's history, "Rev. H. P. James served from 1929 to 1930. Rev. J. W. Heywood served from 1930 to 1931. Rev. Marshall Moore served from 1931 to 1943, and he led the church in significant debt liquidation and hiring of staff. Rev. P. L. Harvey served from 1943 to 1944 and led the church in burning its mortgage. Rev. L. W. Veal served from 1946 to 1953."[22]

In 1987, the church, under the Rev. James E. Milton's leadership led the congregation in paying off the church's mortgage, building an addition to the church and and implementing a charter school and the Southern Day Care Center. The church also purchased several rental houses. "This period of the church's history saw the churches membership at over 3,000. Many need-meeting ministries were started and maintained during this time. The church impacted the Avondale community in such a great way that the community looked to Southern as a strong advocate in the fight for social justice and change."[23]

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[21] "SBC History," https://www.sbchurchcincy.org/history/.

[22] SBC History, https://www.sbchurchcincy.org/history/.

[23] SBC History, https://www.sbchurchcincy.org/history/.

From 1997-2007, the "church's membership had been dramatically impacted due to a church dispute and by the time of the transition the membership was only 700."[24]

During the years 2009 to 2019, Dr. Robert E. Baines Jr. led the church in developing disciples and establishing several ministries that served the community in providing more than 16,070 volunteer hours and$101,576 in community involvement. Dr. Baines resigned in 2019. Additionally, membership decreased to 300.[25] In July of 2019, Rev. Dan W. Larkin Jr., a member, was selected to serve as the interim pastor.

According to the church's historical record, "During this time, Rev. Dan W. Larkin Jr., and his team has given steadfast leadership to the church making necessary enhances to the facility and kept us together amid a global pandemic. He is approaching his fourth year and continues to serve dutifully."[26] On May 8, 2023, Rev. Larkin, Jr. was elected to official serve as pastor, making him the "first son of the church to become its pastor."[27]

Present

Over the last thirty years, Southern has undergone some major changes and transitions. The church reached its peak growth in the eighties and early nineties averaging over three-thousand members on its membership roster. It was filled with members from all ages, levels of education, and was ninety-eight percent black.

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[24] SBC History, https://www.sbchurchcincy.org/history/.

[25] SBC History, https://www.sbchurchcincy.org/history/.

[26] "SBC History," https://www.sbchurchcincy.org/history/.

[27] "SBC History," https://www.sbchurchcincy.org/history/.

Currently, the membership has three-hundred and fifty members on its roll. The drastic and dramatic change was due to several factors. The first was the death of the pastor who grew the church to its peak and pastored for twenty-seven years. After his death, half of the membership left the church. The succeeding pastor remained for ten years. In the middle of his term, the churched suffered another split due to a lawsuit that was filed against the family of the previous pastor. The current pastor at that time only remained for five more years. At the time of his leaving, the membership was approximately seven hundred members strong. The next pastor was able to maintain the membership for the first five years. By year six, the membership declined due to the administrative style of the pastor. The church would experience its next major split by year ten when he resigned. At the time of his departure the membership had declined to a little under four hundred. The churches ministries had declined from over twenty-five need meeting ministries to less than ten. Children, youth and young adult ministries were affected negatively by more than percent. This has left the church with a membership body of 80 percent adults over sixty-five, 15 percent, middle adults, and five percent children, youth and young adults. Sunday school and Bible study participation is approximately at 45 percent. The active ministries are music, media, ushers and trustee. The deacon ministry is down to seven men of whom only two study, serve and give. The worship attendance is at an average of 175 every service.

The second major factor is due to a strong spirit of apathy. Most of the membership is satisfied with attending worship services but not motivated to do much beyond that. All of years of information that they have received has not motived them to transformation. Also, as a result of the pandemic, some have not made their way back to

the mainstream of church or participate and the fear is they never will. Another major factor is that there has been no succession planning or passing the mantle to the next generations. The current leadership recycles their positions and has failed to train new deacons, trustees, teachers or ministry leader to insure the churches longevity and success. Another change is a small group of deacons and trustees who challenge pastoral authority and are trying to remove key pastoral rights from the bylaws. The church has not had a meeting in over three years and the membership is becoming irritated with them in these positions of authority. This small group is not active in any core value areas of ministry to our local body or leads by example in the areas of importance.

Meanwhile, Southern Missionary Baptist Church has many strengths, including a strong remnant of returning people who have bought into the new direction of the pastoral leadership. Even though this remnant is consistently challenged by the opposition, they remain faithful, strong, and diligent. They are working in the children and youth ministries with growth results. There are visitors who are becoming more frequent but due to the church's procrastination on naming a pastor, are hesitant to join the current fellowship. The small remnant is a potential hope that the church can thrive, live, and succeed. While the older membership naturally wants to see the church return to its yesteryear, going backward would not serve the church's future well. Unfortunately for them, that has passed and gone. However, if their mindsets would reset to the core values and Biblical principles along with participation instead of spectating, the church could grow again.

Ministry Journey

My ministry journey provides crucial supporting evidence that validates the importance of the leadership mantle being passed down. I have only been a member of two churches in my lifetime, which I consider home. The first was the Bethlehem Baptist Church of Cincinnati, Ohio, where, from birth to twelve, under the pastorate of the late Rev. A. H. Johnson, I was encouraged and equipped with core-based and Christian values. Since Pastor Johnson also ran a local bible college, his commitment to developing young Christians was unmatched. Under his tenure, I personally attribute my devotion to prayer. During the prayer meetings that were held, we were given the freedom to pray in our own way in the presence of the older believers and were protected from the scrutiny of anyone who would say that we didn't know what we were doing. This gave us the courage to pray without fear and to seek God early and often. The writer of Hebrews affirms by saying, "Let us therefore approach the throne of grace with boldness, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need."[28]

Pastor Johnson provided the foundation for my musical development during his leadership. Without it, I would not have become the instrument of musical change currently. He encouraged and equipped me to lead our musical aggregations at that time. He assigned the church's Minister of Music to train me as her apprentice so that I would continue this work. I was paired with Deacon Tucker during church meetings so that I was a part of the process of how the church's affairs were run. After he died, I was on the church's pastoral search committee at twelve years old because of the training he

[28] Hebrews 4:16.

afforded me. I believe that this is proof that the leadership mantle is critical and crucial to the cultivation of the next generation.

After Pastor Johnson's death, a shift of leadership occurred, and with this change, so did the importance of developing young believers. In a short time, the now aging members started to hold on to the positions that were groomed for the younger members. The voice and viability of the younger were under vicious scrutiny and now threaten the vitality of our future. I was leading and directing our children and youth choir while being mentored by the church's head musician who was an older woman. She was training me privately and allowing me to function publicly. This afforded me the opportunity to begin playing and directing adults. However, there were some older adults who did not take kindly to me being over them. I found that I was not the only young person who was having these types of issues. Adults seemed to be more concerned with holding on to their positions than their development.

Many of our youth and younger adults began to leave due to the way they were being treated. One communion Sunday night, the head musician was not present, and I had to lead the musical sections of the service. A deacon told me what devotional song to play. Everyone was singing and participating, but in the middle of the song, the deacon said I wasn't playing it right in the microphone and told me to stop playing. It was all downhill from there. I had picked a song for the choir to sing, and an older choir member said, "We don't want to sing that." The pastor decided we would just sing acapella for the night. I met with the pastor and asked for my letter. He asked me where I was going, and I told him I didn't know, but I was not staying. My mother supported my decision, and I eventually led my family to a new church. It was a much larger church than I was

accustomed to, but the church was thriving, and there was a high visibility of young people. Most importantly, the pastor of this church preached in a way that seemed to reach me on a different level. I felt alive and moved to want to be developed here. I eventually joined this church, followed by my mother, my brother, and, a few years later, even my father. I joined the choir but didn't tell anyone about any of my abilities as I was still dealing with remnants of church hurt.

What happened next would be one of the most transformational events in my life. I had just left football practice at my high school and walked to church for choir practice. I was about an hour early and was sitting in the fellowship hall. I looked up and saw a piano and walked over to play. While being engrossed in playing an unbeknownst to me, the pastor walked in. He then began a lengthy conversation about wanting me to play for the choir. I didn't want to do it, but I didn't want to be disrespectful, so I did the next best thing. I lied and said I only knew one song. He laughed, smiled, and then said play that one until you learn another. This encounter led to this pastor becoming a mentor, a spiritual father figure, and a friend. The late Pastor James E. Milton and I would become inseparable. He sent me to conference after conference, revival after revival, meeting after meeting, and convention after convention. He invested in my musical and spiritual development. By the time I was a junior in high school, I had become the church's minister of music and the director of the Summer Enrichment Program. I never really could wrap my head around it, especially since I had experienced such hurt, but I'm glad I was able to recover.

Pastor Milton was the catalyst behind me being passionate about the Jesus model of discipleship, which means each reach one. He empowered me to intentionally make

and mark disciples one brother at a time just by having simple conversations and finding common threads like sports, music, or literally anything. In a short time, a new young men's ministry was beginning to form. It was amazing to see young men from all walks of life give their lives to Christ. This opened the door to a productive multi-media ministry, which helped the young men find other jobs in that field. My brother was able to benefit from this in college and still works in radio. The making and marking of these men, who I called brothers, would pay strong dividends for the church. These brothers from other mothers who were being mentored partnered with me for most of my life in and out of the church. We accomplished many things for the Kingdom and our local body. I am proud to say that mostly all my brothers serve in ministry as preachers, pastors, church musicians, media ministry, Sunday school teachers, or coaches. Two of my best friends came from this relationship.

I truly believe iron sharpens iron and have seen the positive results of how investing in these and other young men can prove to be impactful and instrumental to the church's future by empowering and enabling these young men as I was empowered and enabled by my pastor because he was intentional and intuitive enough to invest in me. Years after the death of Pastor Milton, the church is still reaping the fruit of his labor as a a son of the church is the pastor. Moses, that great leader of the children of Israel, passed the leadership mantle to Joshua, knowing that he would not see the Promised Land. We must return to being manufacturers of new disciples and prepare them for the twenty-first century and beyond.

Conclusion

In summary, when the membership of Southern Missionary Baptist Church can make disciples through evangelizing by using community involvement as a catalyst to seek new disciples intentionally, train them, and trust God in the process of their spiritual development, it will help people to accept Christ as their savior and help them choose Southern Missionary Baptist Church as their church home. When the membership of Southern Missionary Baptist Church can return to making new disciples by edifying and strengthening its current membership by being receptive to biblically based preaching, teaching, mindset renewal, Bible study, and accountability partnerships, this will increase the church's ability to help people grow in the Lord.

When the membership of Southern Missionary Baptist Church can adopt, display, and maturely model true Christian love and spiritual maturity by having a friendly spirit, promoting generational partnership and relationships, and addressing and meeting the needs of members who are troubled and facing problems, it will make those members feel loved and encourage them to become active in the church's various ministries while using their spiritual gifts to the fullest. When the members of Southern Missionary Baptist Church can modify its worship practices by providing timely, Bible and doctrinally-based music, infusing responsive content as to hold the attention of all generations, upgrade its multimedia presentations and social media presence, this will transform members into enthusiastic worshippers helping them to not only worship God vertically but also help them hear and obey His will for their lives horizontally. When all of these are adopted, applied, and acknowledged, Southern Missionary Baptist Church

will experience exponential church growth, renew purpose, and create a pipeline for longevity and legacy.

CHAPTER TWO

BIBLICAL FOUNDATIONS

The older I become, the more I have deeper concerns about the future. Whether it's our educational system, the political and governmental perplexities, or human relations, I wonder who will prepare the next generation of leaders. The more significant part of the concern is that too many people currently in leadership positions do not have training, nor do they intend to train other individuals. Therefore, when the time comes, these individuals will be ready to handle the incredible tasks and responsibilities that come before them. Current leaders should equip future leaders to govern, lead, discern, and care for those who will come after them. Providing opportunities for mentees to sharpen their skills with the assistance of mentors is important for the success of the mentees and the church. In just about every secular area and vocation, plans and training for new employees happen with great frequency.

In my opinion, many Black churches do not adequately train their replacements. The church leaders get older as they maintain their titles and status. However, their wisdom and knowledge go far too many times to the hospitals, retirement centers, and, yes, even the grave without a young person ever being able to sponge that wisdom and knowledge. This then causes me great concern about the future of the church. Do we have a plan to provide training to the next generations? Are we currently developing succession plans to shape future leaders for the certainty of a healthy, spiritual, emotional, and much-needed

visible church? Malcolm X, during his speech at the founding rally of the Organization of Afro-American Unity, said, "The future belongs to those who prepare for it today."[1] Thus, the problem at Southern Missionary Baptist Church is that there is no succession plan for ministry leadership. I believe if the senior pastor and existing leadership participate in a seminar about leadership succession, then they will be equipped to identify the future leadership needs of the ministry context.

Based on my context and over thirty-plus years of experience as a layperson, a leader, an employee, a minister, and a pastor, I have chosen to develop a project that would support the mantle passing of leadership from one generation to the next and solidify the future of the church. The church is too important to continue existing with no serious plan for longevity. It was our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ when speaking to Peter about the foundation of the church, who said, "And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it."[2] Since Jesus invested so much into the church by sacrificing Himself for it and its future, we, as church leaders and laypeople, are responsible for fulfilling the mission to make and mark disciples. Doing so will provide a ministry model for shaping future leaders. My pastor selected me for various leadership positions, equipped me for ministry, and prepared me to do the work. His leadership and training provided a critical element in my life. As God has gifted the church, the church must use those gifts according to biblical principles. Ephesians 4:11-13 states, "The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some

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[1] Blackpast, "Malcom X's Speech at the Founding Rally of the Organization of Afro-American Unity," https://www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/speeches-african-american-history/1964-malcolm-x-s-speech-founding-rally-organization-afro-american-unity/.

[2] Matthew 16:18, NRSV, unless otherwise, all bible citations are from the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible.

evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ." The ministry model for shaping future leaders is not a new methodology. The first mention of this concept takes us to the Book of Numbers. The aging leader of the Israelites appoints and passes on the leadership mantle to Joshua. Using the biblical text, Numbers 27:12-23 to undergird my hypotheses, I suggest that there are biblical models that support intentionality concerning leadership succession, training, and preparation for the next generation to be successful in future ministry.

Exegesis of Numbers 27:12-23

> The Lord said to Moses, "Go up this mountain of the Abarim range, and see the land that I have given to the Israelites. When you have seen it, you also shall be gathered to your people, as your brother Aaron was, because you rebelled against my word in the wilderness of Zin when the congregation quarreled with me. You did not show my holiness before their eyes at the waters." (These are the waters of Meribah of Kadesh in the wilderness of Zin.) Moses spoke to the Lord, saying, "Let the Lord, the God of the spirits of all flesh, appoint someone over the congregation who shall go out before them and come in before them, who shall lead them out and bring them in, so that the congregation of the Lord may not be like sheep without a shepherd." So the Lord said to Moses, "Take Joshua son of Nun, a man in whom is the spirit, and lay your hand upon him; have him stand before Eleazar the priest and all the congregation, and commission him in their sight. You shall give him some of your authority, so that all the congregation of the Israelites may obey. But he shall stand before Eleazar the priest, who shall inquire for him by the decision of the Urim before the Lord; at his word they shall go out, and at his word they shall come in, both he and all the Israelites with him, the whole congregation." So Moses did as the Lord commanded him. He took Joshua and had him stand before Eleazar the priest and the whole congregation; he laid his hands on him and commissioned him—as the Lord had directed through Moses.

Authorship and Date

Scholar Eugene Merrill states, the "Universal Jewish and Christian tradition attributes the Book of Numbers (along with the rest of the Pentateuch) to Moses, though little in Numbers explicitly confirms it (cf., however, 33:2; 36:13). Even critical scholars admit that Numbers is an inseparable part of the Pentateuch though, as is well known, they deny its Mosaic authorship. Moses is certainly the principal figure in the book, and throughout, he is a participant in an eyewitness to most of its major events."[3] The last words recorded in Numbers are, "These are the commandments and the ordinances that the LORD commanded through Moses to the Israelites in the plains of Moab by the Jordan opposite Jericho."[4] This verse implies that the journey through the wilderness was completed and that Israel was about to enter the land of Canaan. Crossing the Jordan occurred 40 years after the Exodus, an event dated 1446 BC. Some scholars suggest that Numbers was written around 1406, before Moses' death, which also took place that year.[5]

Background and Literary Context of Numbers

According to R. K. Harrison, "the Book of Numbers is a traditional and inseparable part of the five-volume collection known as the Torah or Pentateuch, the overall authorship of which has been attributed in orthodox Jewish and Christian thought to Moses." [6]

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[3] Eugene H. Merrill, "Numbers," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 215.

[4] Numbers 36:13.

[5] Merrill, "Numbers," 215.

[6] R. K. Harrison, *Numbers: An Exegetical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic: A Division of Baker Publishing Group, 2019), 1.

Because of this fact, Numbers is viewed in its literary context and within the lens of the Canon. The first section of the Pentateuch is Genesis, which means "beginnings." The summation of Genesis affirms God as the Creator and marks the beginning of everything He created, including humanity. The second section is Exodus, which means "coming out." This book furthers the conversation of God and His creation as they face oppression and adversity in Egypt but are delivered from the Egyptian rule of Pharoah as Moses, God's chosen leader, leads them out. The third section of Leviticus primarily deals with the newly established leaders' offices and established roles of the priesthood. Leviticus has two themes. One is sanctification, which involves holiness and godly living; the other includes separation, which means they are set apart from certain practices. In short, the critical command was to guide the nation of Israel by keeping the dos and don'ts of God's sovereign rule before them. "This then brings us to Numbers, which graphically describes the experiences of the Israelites during the wilderness wanderings and shows the difficulties Moses encountered as he endeavored to guide God's people in times of hardship, apostasy, and open rebellion against God's will."[7]

The fifth and final section shares the renewed and restored relationship with Israel and God. The final section provides information about Israel's spiritual formation and foundation through its leadership. God instructs Moses to enact community leadership with each of the twelve tribes assigned duties to perform and pass on to future generations. Aaron and Moses, both advanced in age, are succeeded by the next generation of leaders. Neither Aaron nor Moses will see Israel reach their appointed and anointed destination. Before Moses dies, he passes the leadership mantle to Joshua, who leads the Israelites to

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[7] Harrison, *Numbers: An Exegetical Commentary*, 2.

blessings in the Promised Land. Overall, the book of Numbers provides important insights into the early history of the Israelites and their relationship with God, as well as demonstrating themes of obedience, rebellion, and the consequences of sin. It highlights the importance of faith, trust, and obedience in the journey towards the Promised Land. The background and literary context are essential to this conversation as they lead us to the purposes of the book.

Purposes, Themes, and Theology

The Book of Numbers serves several purposes, both theological and historical, in the broader narrative of the Hebrew Bible. Some key purposes of the Book of Numbers include at least five major themes. The first begins with organizing the Israelite community. The book provides detailed instructions for structurally and ceremonially organizing the Israelite community. It outlines the responsibilities of the priests and Levites, establishes the tribal divisions and responsibilities, and sets guidelines for the religious observances and rituals of the Israelites. Secondly, it features the recording of their wilderness journey. Numbers chronicles the Israelites' journey through the wilderness, including their travels, trials, and tribulations. It recounts their encounters with neighboring tribes, conflicts within the community, and how God provides for them in the wilderness. This journey is a formative experience for the Israelites, shaping their identity as God's chosen people. Thirdly, it demonstrates the consequences of disobedience. Throughout the book of Numbers, the Israelites repeatedly disobey God's commands and face consequences for their actions. This serves as a moral lesson for the reader, highlighting the importance of faith, obedience, and trust in God. The book emphasizes the need for righteousness and

fidelity to God's covenant. Fourth, we find the foundations and establishment of legal and ethical norms. The book contains significant legal material, including laws related to sacrifices, purity regulations, and social justice. These laws establish ethical guidelines for the Israelites and reinforce the importance of living by God's will. Fifth, it shows the highlights of God's faithfulness. Despite the Israelites' repeated failures and rebellions, God remains faithful to His covenant with them. The book of Numbers emphasizes God's presence and provision for the Israelites throughout their wilderness journey, demonstrating His steadfast love and faithfulness even in human frailty. The book of Numbers provides a theological and historical framework for understanding the Israelites' journey from Egypt to the Promised Land and conveys readers' important moral and spiritual lessons. It plays a crucial role in shaping the religious identity of the Israelite community and reinforcing their relationship with God.

According to Bailey, there are at least four fundamental elements to visualize. The first is ultimate causes. "It assumes the existence of a sole deity, creator of all things, who has chosen the descendants of Abraham for a special destiny and now works through history for the actualization of promises made to them. Such a theological assumption is, of course, often at odds with modern secular historians." [8] The second is God's dependability. God displays His steadfast love. "The term used here by NRSV ("steadfast love") is more than affection: it basically denotes fidelity to one's formal word."[9] The third is His Omnipresence and guidance, which simply speaks to how God is everywhere, at the same time, and in the same way. He does all this by not losing one ounce of His

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[8] Lloyd R. Bailey, *Leviticus–Numbers*, ed. P. Keith Gammons and Samuel E. Balentine, Smyth & Helwys Bible Commentary (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys Publishing, 2005), 358.

[9] Bailey, *Leviticus–Numbers*, 358.

omnipotence or omniscience, which affirms that God is the greatest guide, as proven in Numbers. The fourth marks out that there must be trust and obedience. When Israel trusts and obeys, they are overwhelmingly triumphant; when they don't, they fail miserably.

The Book of Numbers features several significant characters who play key roles in the narrative. Some major characters in the Book of Numbers provide significant evidence to validate and confirm the argument. The first is Moses, a central figure in the Book of Numbers, serving as the leader of the Israelites and the primary intermediary between God and the people. Moses plays a crucial role in guiding the Israelites through the wilderness, receiving divine instructions, and interceding on behalf of the people. Aaron is Moses' brother and serves as the high priest of the Israelites. Aaron plays a significant role in the religious rituals and ceremonies described in the book of Numbers, overseeing the Tabernacle and the priesthood. Aaron later disobeyed God's command when Moses struck a rock with his staff to bring forth water for the Israelites. Instead of following God's instructions to speak to the rock, Aaron and Moses hit it twice with their staffs. As a result of this disobedience, God told Moses and Aaron that they would not lead the people into the Promised Land. Aaron died on Mount Hor shortly after this incident. According to Numbers 20:7-13, Aaron did not enter the Promised Land because of his disobedience and lack of faith.

The last is Joshua. Joshua is one of two of the twelve spies sent to scout out the Promised Land. He is noted for his faithfulness and trust in God, standing out among his fellow spies who bring back a negative report. Over the ensuing decades, Joshua proved a faithful servant to God and assistant to Moses. Before Moses died, he received instructions

from God to appoint Joshua as the next leader. Joshua, like Moses, proved an apt leader who relied on God to shepherd Israel.

Historical Analysis

The historical analysis of the Book of Numbers is critical to the context and understanding of this writing. Knowing the setting, the people, the manners and the customs, political realities, and beliefs will shed light on the total context. The setting of Numbers finds the nation of Israel in the "wilderness" of Sinai. They are on a journey from Mt. Sinai to reach the Promised Land. God delivered the people out of Egypt and promised them a new land in which to live. The people show conflicting behavior during these times. They have a constant struggle with their faith and their doubts. They show signs of great obedience and then follow up with moments of strong disobedience. This causes them to complain regularly against Moses as God's representative and with God. They are handcuffed by their fear and stubbornness, leading them to long for idolatry. All of this occurs with them while being eyewitnesses to the numerous miracles and the bountiful blessings of God. This behavior goes back and forth for the duration of the book. It brings to light the struggle between our faith and our humanity. This period is very significant to the history of our faith. "During these years, God was molding this rag-tag bunch of slaves into a nation — into His covenant people. He gave them their law, priesthood, sacrificial system, and the tabernacle, which later provided a pattern for Solomon's temple. So, all the basic religious institutions of Israel appeared during this desert experience."[10] In the

[10] Howard Frederic Vos, *Nelson's New Illustrated Bible Manners & Customs: How the People of the Bible Really Lived* (Nashville, TN: T. Nelson Publishers, 1999), 84.

wilderness period, God institutes holiness as the standard and core value for the Israelites. He begins with the Law as a directive for holy living. In his book, Vos writes, "As God began to impart the law, He first gave Moses the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:1–17). Moses repeats them with only slight variations in Deuteronomy 5:7–21.[11] After this and in conjunction with Leviticus, the beginnings of special days, festivals, and feasts ultimately led to corporate worship. These principles are still present today as a part of New Testament practices. Lastly, another major cultural and historical analysis speaks to the government. Overall, it begins with a theocracy or God-ruled. It is then structured into a hierarchy that starts with Moses as the head of leadership and is followed by various appointed leadership groups serving underneath him to assist with the total government of the nation of Israel. The first level underneath Moses was that of the tribal chief. Each of the tribes had a leader who worked with Moses to handle the matters of that tribe separately. The next tier was that of the Levites. Remember that this group was set apart for the religious duties and service in the Tabernacle. They were in charge of the care and transportation of the Tabernacle and assisting the priests. The priests were the next group in the hierarchy. The major function was to conduct the rituals and sacrifices of the people. It was Aaron and his descendants that served in the Tabernacle. Another group of leaders was the elders. Moses chose seventy men to assist with governing the people and administering the appropriate justice. Lastly, there were the military leaders. These leaders were to head the armies of Israel and lead them into battle if necessary. Joshua, the successor of Moses, was one of these leaders. Together, they governed the entire nation of Israel under God, with Moses as the top leader.

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[11] Vos, *Nelson's New Illustrated Bible Manners & Customs*, 91.

Detailed analysis of Numbers 27:12-23

Concerning the Book of Numbers, Scholar Gordon J. Wehnam writes, "In the gospels, our Lord's predictions about his death form a somber background to the growing success of his mission. In Numbers, there is a similar interplay between the promise of the land and the warning that Moses will never enter it. The closer Israel comes to Canaan, the nearer draws the death of their founding father."[12] This entire pericope is dedicated to the appointment of Joshua to succeed Moses.

In Gordon Keddie's *According to the Promise*, he writes, "Only one man was left of the generation that was denied entrance into the inheritance of the promised land, and that was Moses himself. What an amazing irony! The great leader of the wilderness wanderings was now, as it were, the very last internal Israelite 'obstacle' to entry to the promised land! The whole history of the forty years in the desert comes to a point—a turning point — in the person of Moses. We, as it were, stand on Mount Nebo with the patriarch, with the whole desert experience behind us and the prospect of Canaan before us. Moses led Israel thus far, but no further. Now, another must take his place and lead them to victory and conquest."[13]

Verses 12-15 show the importance of justice, equality, and fairness in inheritance. The text depicts the daughters of Zelophehad, who had come to Moses with their issue. Moses handled the legality of their request because their father died without having any

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[12] Gordon J. Wenham, *Numbers: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 4, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1981), 217.

[13] Gordon J. Keddie, *According to Promise: The Message of the Book of Numbers*, Welwyn Commentary Series (Louisville, KY: Evangelical Press, 1992), 176.

sons. It was also a great lesson for Joshua as he would get a glimpse of the type of weighty matters leadership must respond to in the way God would, regardless of gender, and with integrity and equality. As the aged Hebrew leader approached the end of a long and eventful life, God kept His promise by allowing Moses to view the promised land of Canaan. God instructed Moses to ascend a nearby mountain (MT הַר הָעֲבָרִים, *har hāʿăbārîm*) for this purpose.[14]

In verses 16-17, Moses demonstrates godly wisdom and leadership as he prays for the welfare of his people. He prays that God will show mercy upon them and give them someone who will carry them on into the future. He shows unusual humility, seeing that he would only see the Promised Land and not enter it because of his transgression. This type of leadership would also serve as another teachable moment for Joshua. It would show Joshua that the people's needs would have to come before his own and couple that understanding based on Moses' transgression that, as Samuel later stated, "Surely, to obey is better than sacrifice."[15] Moses' prayer was like the one he prayed after Korah sinned. It was to ask that Israel not be punished. Now, he would be the person who sinned, yet he still prayed for them to be spared. In addressing his request to God for a successor, Moses described the Lord in terminology used at the time of the rebellion of Korah (Num. 16:22). The MT רוּחֹת לְכָל-בָּשָׂר (*rûḥōt lĕkol-bāśār*, "spirits of all flesh") describes the distinction between necessary and contingent existence.[16] God tells Moses to appoint Joshua as his

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[14] Harrison, *Numbers*, 357.

[15] 1 Samuel 15:22.

[16] Harrison, *Numbers: An Exegetical Commentary*, 358.

successor, lay his hands on him as a sign of transference of power, and relinquish all authority to him publicly.

In verses 18-23, Joshua is officially Moses' successor. He is inevitably the best choice after spending many years as his assistant, faithfully and patiently waiting for this moment. The mantle is passed, which represents a new order or type of leadership. God spoke to Moses face to face (12:6–8); Joshua will be instructed by Eleazar the priest, who will use the Urim and Thummim, the sacred lot, to discover God's will (cf. Exod. 28:30: 1 Sam. 14:41; 28:6).[17] The significance of laying on hands shows the necessity of empowering worthy candidates to move further in the designed destiny. After Moses laid his hand on him thus commissioning him, Joshua was to stand before Eleazar the priest to symbolize the relationship that the two would enjoy from then on—Eleazar would reveal the will of God through the Urim (cf. Ex. 28:30) and Joshua would carry out God's directives.[18]

Joshua, as Moses' successor, unlocks a door to the conquest of Canaan. The newly appointed leader gave Israel the necessary edge to give the Israelites the Promised Land. The Book of Joshua further tells the narrative of the conquest. However, this shift is where it began. Although Moses wouldn't be able to go forward, he loved God and His people enough to secure the victory, even if it cost him missing it. "The Lord's answer was to appoint that Joshua be ordained as Israel's leader, in the presence of all Israel and by the laying on of Moses' hands. He was endowed with 'the spirit of wisdom because Moses had laid his hands on him. So the Israelites listened to him and did what the Lord had

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[17] Wenham, *Numbers: An Introduction and Commentary*, 217.

[18] Merrill, "Numbers," 249.

commanded Moses' (Deut. 34:9). Unlike Moses, who had direct access to God, Joshua was to seek the Lord's guidance through Eleazar the priest. The prophetic ministry of the church is the light for the nations as well as individuals, a truth that civil governments ignore at their peril (Ps. 2:10–12)."[19]

Additional Biblical Support

In addition to the main passage, which covers the intentionality of leadership succession, we find several other biblical models that shaped future leaders for ministry longevity. One example of this is the relationship between Elijah and Elisha. The Bible affirms the reality and importance of mentorship and the expansion of God's work through the servitude of faithful and obedient leadership and investment in faithful and obedient followership. Consider 1 Kings 19:15-20:

> Then the Lord said to him, "Go, return on your way to the wilderness of Damascus; when you arrive, you shall anoint Hazael as king over Aram. Also you shall anoint Jehu son of Nimshi as king over Israel; and you shall anoint Elisha son of Shaphat of Abel-meholah as prophet in your place. Whoever escapes from the sword of Hazael, Jehu shall kill; and whoever escapes from the sword of Jehu, Elisha shall kill. Yet I will leave seven thousand in Israel, all the knees that have not bowed to Baal, and every mouth that has not kissed him." So he set out from there, and found Elisha son of Shaphat, who was plowing. There were twelve yoke of oxen ahead of him, and he was with the twelfth. Elijah passed by him and threw his mantle over him. He left the oxen, ran after Elijah, and said, "Let me kiss my father and my mother, and then I will follow you."

God's work continued uninterrupted by passing the leadership mantle from Elijah to Elisha. Because of Elijah's mentoring and training, Elisha could receive the mantle and continue the mission. Elisha received a double portion of Elijah's gift and power and could do even greater work than his predecessor. This succession allowed a more significant

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[19] Keddie, *According to Promise*, 178.

expansion. Elisha reached more people in more places, and God's name was well known, causing a powerful global evangelism movement. Lastly, because the transition was so smooth, it kept the people unified, and it assured them that the person in charge was ready, willing, and able to face any obstacle that came their way.

The relationship between the apostles Paul and Timothy is another strong New Testament ministry model for shaping future leaders in 2 Timothy 1:6-7, which states, "For this reason, I remind you to rekindle the gift of God that is within you through the laying on of my hands; for God did not give us a spirit of cowardice, but rather a spirit of power and of love and of self-discipline."

The biblical leadership model of ministry succession of the Apostle Paul and Timothy produced similar outcomes as Elijah and Elisha. Paul mentored Timothy, providing him with spiritual wisdom and guidance for his assigned work. Because Paul empowered and entrusted Timothy with leadership responsibilities, he proved to be very capable of allowing a smooth transition and the ministry work continuing without interruption. Paul encouraged Timothy to bring out his gift, and he did the same by reaching new regions and generations of gifted people as he spread the gospel. Timothy also was chosen because of his proven service record. He was faithful in his discipleship, which enhanced the work and furthered the mission. It is an essential element as it applies to faithfulness being rewarded not just by God but also for the people of God to recognize, elevate, and reward those who model such faithfulness. Paul's mentorship expanded the local church by creating a pool of future leaders that others in the church community could rely on. Both examples rest upon the ultimate ministry model for shaping future leaders, and that comes in the person of Jesus Christ, who said, "All authority in heaven and on

earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."[20]

Conclusion

In conclusion, this passage and the supporting biblical texts support the central theme of passing the leadership mantle from one generation to the next. Moses was intentional and innovative in training Joshua for his inevitable role of becoming an emerging leader for the Israelites. This begins with Moses identifying Aaron, Hur, Caleb, and Joshua. Even though some of those he mentored didn't reach their desired potential, Joshua did. He could not have been prepared to assume the mantle of leadership if there was no prework from Moses.

The succession model that Moses and Joshua showed was continual leadership, training, mentorship, yielding to divine guidance and approval, unity and cohesion, strength and confidence, and making sure that the ministry mantle never falls to the ground without someone being willing and able to pick it up. It embodies the spirit of the Olympic torch, being meticulously passed on with preordained participants to run their leg of the race to get the torch to its designed destination.

The biblical and exegetical text from Moses supports the necessity of spiritual mentorship, which involves a supportive and nurturing relationship. The relationship also provides an example of a role model. Mentors serve as role models for their mentees,

[20] Matthew 28:18–20.

demonstrating positive behaviors, values, and leadership skills that the mentee can learn from and emulate. In his role, Moses is also willing to share his knowledge, skills, and expertise to help the mentee develop new skills that the mentee can learn from and emulate. Moses was able to help Joshua by supporting his personal growth and development. Joshua was then given the confidence, self-awareness, and resilience to be built up. The contrasting model is found in Joshua himself. Joshua developed a willingness to learn. It must be a genuine desire to learn. Joshua was also an active participant and one who showed respect for Moses' time and advice. He was committed to grow and develop. Joshua then showed initiative in his development and actively sought opportunities to grow. He had to have the humility to embrace his deficiencies, knowing that familiar proverb, "Iron sharpens iron, and one person sharpens the wits of another."[21]

Passages like the main text of this paper uphold that God, and his meticulous design and omniscience, has already given numerous examples of how to shape future leaders if we would only follow the ministry models he has already provided. The relationship between senior leaders and future leaders is a key example of a God-ordained leadership succession model for shaping future leaders. Moses appointed Joshua as his successor prior to his death, showing the importance of a clear and deliberate transfer of leadership. Moses mentored and trained Joshua. Moses did this by grooming Joshua for leadership while giving him opportunities to demonstrate his abilities. Moses's decisions allowed Joshua to develop the necessary skills, wisdom, and experience to take on the leadership role for the nation of Israel. Again, the relationship between Moses and Joshua further demonstrates the importance of trust and continuity needed in leadership succession. It was Moses' trust

[21] Proverbs 27:17.

and confidence that permitted Joshua to carry on his mission and lead the Israelites into the promised land. This could have only taken place if Moses had great confidence in Joshua's ability and character. Often, too many churches have prepared qualified future leaders but, for some reason, overlooked or bypassed those persons, not seeing that they were designed to fulfill the ministry assignment within their own contexts. Those leaders were sent to other places but not intentionally prepared for their own places. Their relationship provides a clear example of how a leader can prepare and anointing a successor, ensuring a smooth transition of leadership and the stability of a mission or a vision. At some point all their preparation must be put into action while the mentor overseas invalidates that this person is ready and able to fulfill the task within or outside the context.

Supporting biblical relationships like Elijah and Elisha, who trained and mentored Elisha to succeed him. Before Elijah was taken up to heaven, he passed his mantle to Elisha. Elijah's action demonstrated the transfer of leadership and authority. In the case of Saul and David, God initially appointed Saul and, due to his disobedience, chose David to succeed him. Although there was tension between the two, the tension was not because David was not anointed and prepared. It was due to Saul's own actions. Unfortunately, some leaders who have proteges underneath their care prohibit the advancement of the successor based on their own failures. In the New Testament scriptures, Apostle Paul mentored and trained Timothy to become a leader in the church. Paul's letters to Timothy offered guidance and encouragement as he took on those responsibilities. Lastly, no better example of this is given in the methodology of biblical instruction that Jesus did as he appointed and trained the twelve apostles to be his dedicated followers and future leaders of the early Christian Church after Jesus' death and resurrection, these men continued his

mission to the masses and spread the gospel and established what we have is Christian faith today. The importance of intentional leadership succession, mentorship and passing on of authority and responsibilities from one leader to the next is the biblical model that ensures God's plan for his church is carried out from generation to generation.

This biblical and exegetical data supports my project in the following ways. The challenge within my context area is that the current leadership of the Southern Missionary Baptist Church is aging. Current leaders have held on to their positions, titles, and status, as well as their wisdom and knowledge. They have neglected the responsibility of mentoring and planning for the church's future. This caused many young people to leave the church or be apprehensive about leading. This truth became even more obvious as fewer and fewer church leaders were being developed. The older generation has become more and more addicted to their time and has now become prisoners of it. From spending more than thirty-plus years in this church, this was not always the case.

Meanwhile, when I arrived at Southern Missionary Baptist Church, the pastor was intentional about empowering the younger generations. What seemed risky to others became a formula of success for the church, causing it to be what would have been called a megachurch of its time. He placed teenagers like me into highly visible ministry positions. He sent us to local, state, and national conventions, planting and watering us like prized flowers in a garden. As the church flourished, the younger leaders were emerging. Many became pastors and influencers around the nation in various fields of ministry. He was doing exactly what this text and other biblical texts had within his pages. This significant influencer died. When he died, so did the practices. A slow erosion began leaving the church extremely wounded. I believe the church can recover if the current senior pastor

and leaders recognize the need for succession planning to reemerge. The succession of Moses to Joshua, Elijah to Elisha, Barnabas to Paul, and Paul to Timothy has successfully shaped the spreading of the gospel. The Scriptures have provided clear direction. This fuels the project further because of the great need for this to resurface. The pairing of seasoned members with those who are blooming can fuel the next generations of believers to do even greater ministry work.

The problem at Southern Missionary Baptist Church is that there is no succession plan for ministry leadership. If the senior pastor and existing leadership participate in a seminar about leadership succession, they will be equipped to identify the ministry context's future leadership needs. Proverbs 29:18 is clear: “Where there is no vision, the people perish.”

CHAPTER THREE

HISTORICAL FOUNDATIONS

Every narrative has a beginning. Whether it is an athlete's journey, a politician's rise to fame, or even a family's genealogy everything has a beginning. Thus, we call it history, the necessary and affirming information needed to give a qualitative and quantitative picture of the past, a clearer picture of the present present and help us to imagine positive outcomes for the future. Understanding the historical background of a subject can provide important context for current events and developments. By knowing the history of a subject, one can better understand how it has evolved over time and the reason behind its status. Another reason for providing this context is that it will help eliminate misconceptions about the subject. When you examine the historical context, you are able to separate the fiction from the facts and gain a more accurate understanding. Lastly, when you explore the historical background, you can also help others to appreciate the complexities and nuances of that topic.

History is often filled with contradictory viewpoints, conflicting agendas, and unexpected twists and turns; all of these can help to deepen one's understanding of the subject matter at hand. The words of James Weldon Johnson ring clear when it comes to the history of other people. Lyrics in the third stanza of *"Lift Every Voice and Sing,"* is a historical framework of the Black church. The lyrics are "God of our weary years, God of

our silent tears. Thou who has brought us thus far on the way. Thou who has by thy might, led us into the light. Keep us forever in the path we pray."[1]

The path and its origin must be investigated and walked in order to stay true to it. That is exactly what will be provided in this section of this document. In the previous section, we began with the Biblical and exegetical beginnings and foundations concerning the problem statement. The problem statement is that there is no succession plan that is currently in place at the Southern Missionary Baptist Church. The context is currently facing a severe decline in servant leadership. This is due to the aging servant leaders holding on to their positions and failing to train and equip future leaders for the church's sustainability. The hope is that if the senior pastor and existing leadership participate in a seminar about leadership succession, then they will be equipped to identify the future leadership needs of the ministry context. When these leaders recognize the need for succession planning, they will begin commissioning, equipping, and mentoring new and younger leaders, which will provide the church with a pool of capable and qualified leaders who will be able to carry out the vision of the church and provide longevity for its future existence.

Based upon my context and experiences within my context, I have chosen to develop a project that would support the mantle passing of leadership from one generation to the next to solidify the future of the church. Using the historical information surrounding leadership in the Black Church in America to undergird my hypotheses, I suggest that there are historical evidence and models that support intentionality

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[1] James Weldon Johnson, *"Lift Every Voice and Sing"* (Nashville, TN: National Baptist Publishing Board, 1977), 477.

concerning leadership succession, training and preparation for the next generation to be successful in future ministry. This is inclusive but not limited to the persons who held the leadership mantle and those who received it and continued. Before we begin to understand the necessity of a leadership succession model, it is important to know the current definition of the term as it relates to the Black Church. Scholar Stacey Floyd-Thomas writes, "It is necessary to explain what we mean by using the term *Black Church*. Over the course of the last century, the concept of the Black Church—and *Negro Church* before that—was a scholarly construct that achieved popular resonance throughout American culture and society. For the sake of simplicity and efficacy, the term *Black Church* became a euphemistic generalization for the collective identity of African American Christians in both academic and societal contexts."[2] This framework provides consistency when discussing and presenting historical and foundational elements.

In this paper, I will provide an overview of the Black church and her history. They outline those who were in leadership and how they shaped and developed the Black Church. They also contain those who held the leadership mantle and who picked up the mantle. They identify the periods of time when the church thrived due to leadership and periods when it stagnated or declined due to a lack of leadership. This information is vital to the project's landscape. The historical data from the history of the Black church movement in America informs my DMin project by providing a historical legacy that supports the success of transitional structure as it applies to transitions and commissioning new

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[2] Stacey Floyd-Thomas et al., *Black Church Studies: An Introduction* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2007), 25.

leadership. The data further supports ongoing training and preparation of those leaders before their actual appointment. The evidence within this historical data will serve as an example that I believe can be used as an example of providing transitional and In conjunction with the history of the Black church, we will also examine the motivations of the founders of HBCUs. Every HBCU that was founded during the Reconstruction Era was created with the purpose of training newly freed African slaves how to be leaders of our race. Each HBCU founder had individual motives for developing these Black men and women into leaders. However, each founder created a unique process of leadership training, development, and deployment.

This paper will analyze the founders' motivations, leadership training, development, and deployment models while exploring their methodologies that I can be use during the implementation of my final project. I will also consider the qualities, characteristics, prerequisites, and requirements utilized to select future leaders.

A powerful opening in Wayne Croft's book, *A History of the Black Church: I Don't Feel No Ways Tired* states, "The history of black people in the United States is a history of challenge and resilience, of suffering and solidarity, of injustice and prophetic resistance. It is a history steeped in the hope and strength that African Americans have derived from their faith in God and from the church that provided safety, community, consolation, and empowerment."[3] The African American church is the only institution still in existence that was birthed from slavery and nurtured in the bosom of social protest.

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[3] Wayne Croft, *A History of the Black Church: I Don't Feel No Ways Tired* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 2020), 240.

Regarding the Black church, Carter G. Woodson states, "Its tribal functions are shown in its religious activity, its social authority and general guiding and coordinating work; its family functions are shown by the fact that the church is a center of social life and intercourse; acts as newspaper and intelligence bureau, is the center of amusements — indeed, is the world in which the Negro moves and acts. So far-reaching are these functions of the church that its organization is almost political."[4] The contributions of the Black church standardized its position on the liberation of its people. The pros of the Black churches and their autonomous governmental structure are also cons, making the beliefs, thoughts, and practices inconsistent. Woodson "traces the influence of the black church in America from colonial times through the early years of the twentieth century. Beginning with early church movements in the North and efforts to minister to slaves in the South, Woodson describes the origins of religious instruction for a race that he characterizes as "neglected among an unenlightened colonial population."[5] His research and leadership opened the door to establishing an early form of succession planning and grooming future leaders. To accurately track the mantle passing and leadership development, it is important to document the history. The Black church and its leadership have been detrimental to the success of the Black community. Without their contributions and their leaders, the advancement of Black people would have never been fully realized. The training of those individuals and the continuous development of emerging leaders laid foundational

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[4] Robert A. Wortham, ed., *W.E. B. DuBois and the Sociology of the Black Church and Religion, 1897-1914* (New York, NY: Lexington Books, 2018), 54.

[5] Carter G. Woodson, *The History of the Negro Church* (Washington, DC: The Associated Publishers, 1921), 5.

principles for governmental and core values within the Black church and its surrounding communities.

The Beginnings

The Black church began with several stages of development. The foundational core includes but is not limited to the Invisible Institution, Praise Houses, the Visible Institution, the Anglican Church, Congregationalist, and then evolves into Baptist and Methodist. In 1619, Africans were forcibly removed from their homeland and landed in Jamestown, Virginia. This was the first documented arrival of Africans to the United States. The Africans were taken from Africa and captured. Colonizers debated whether Africans could become Christians. Some believed the Africans did not have a soul, making them less than human. Despite vigorous debates around this concern, by the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, a growing number of enslaved Africans converted to Christianity. Paradoxically, however, Africans preserved much of their religious belief and practices from Africa. As Henry H. Mitchell, author of numerous theological books, including Black Church Beginnings, explains: "Slaves, not masters, took the initiative to translate their African beliefs into English and into inescapably Christian terms. They also sorted through the Christian Bible and selected ideas useful to them in the new slave experience. By the time the masters were willing to concede souls to slaves, satisfied that the Christian faith could be used to enforce obedience and increase market value, the slaves had long since established their underground version of the true faith."[6] This would now move into a

[6] Henry Mitchell, *Black Church Beginnings: The Long-Hidden Realities of the First Years* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2004), 193.

different form of church. These converts worshipped with whites on the plantation, but services were restrictive. Seating was circumscribed, and their participation in the Lord's Supper and baptism was regulated. White preachers heralded a "corrupted" gospel of which colonized Africans grew weary. Black converts loved to hear their own preachers because they used culturally appropriate language, which helped them to visualize life beyond their present situation. However, with a deep need to express their faith more freely, African Christians began gathering in what would become known as the "Invisible Church" or "Invisible Institution," which was located deep in the woods, swamps, and hush arbors—as far away as possible, outside the watchful eye of their masters.

African Christians would eventually move from secret places of worship to visible places known as "Praise Houses." These spaces included cabins, barns, cotton houses, and small one-room buildings. Because of the rising population of slaves who were Christian, owners kept a watchful eye on them. Some slaveholders-built Praise Houses on their plantations with a designated overseer to supervise them. Praise Houses would then move to form of the Visible Institution. "The major turning point in African American Christianity and the creation of the historic Black Church tradition came in conjunction with periods of widespread pietism and religious revivalism known as the First and Second Great Awakenings. During the early 1730s, a Congregationalist preacher named Jonathan Edwards began a more emotional, participatory ministry aimed at bringing more people into the faith through baptism and conversion."[7] Edwards was a key figure because he helped to shape the African American mindset using thought and theology. He wrote many

[7] Juan M. Floyd-Thomas, *Liberating Black Church History: Making It Plain* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2014), 35

sermons and the messages within his writings was far reaching to the black community which helped shape their religious beliefs and practices. The mantle was passed then onto another individual who picked up where Edwards left off.

The historic creation of the Black church occurred in the 1730s and 1740s during the Great Awakening, another major turning point in African American Christianity. Historian Carter G. Woodson called this period the "Dawn of a New Day." Anglican, Congregational, Episcopal, and Presbyterian churches slowly grew. However, the beliefs, worship style, and practices of Methodists and Baptists strongly appealed to Africans more. "By the 1740s, George Whitefield also carried an evangelical style of Christianity to the British colonies in North America. In their "fire and brimstone" sermons, Edwards and Whitefield—while they did not advocate emancipation—preached to Black people and white people alike."[8] Their plain-styled message of hope, liberation, and redemption resonated with enslaved Africans' religious sensibilities. Africans could also establish connection with practices such as baptism, spirit possession, congregational call and response, singing, shouting, dancing, extemporaneous and rhythmic preaching, and the like. The early Baptist worked hard on evangelism. Winning enslaved Africans to Christianity was dramatically successful among Methodists and Baptists. Early on, Methodists and Baptists promoted the idea that all Christians were equal in the sight of God. Not all Methodists and Baptists challenged the system of slavery, but Methodists did take a stronger stance than their Baptist counterparts. Some Baptist leaders freed enslaved Blacks. In 1789, the General Committee of Virginia Baptists condemned slavery. They viewed enslavement as a violent deprivation of the rights of nature and inconsistent with a

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[8] Juan Floyd-Thomas, *Liberating Black Church History,* 35.

republican government. They recommended other Baptists destroy the horrid evil of slavery. As a national body, it did not denounce slavery. By contrast, Methodists demonstrated their denominational stance against slavery by passing a church law that required the emancipation of slaves. Division over the issue of slavery prompted a Methodists schism in 1844 and in 1845 for Baptists. The two primary founders of the General Baptist movement were John Smyth, a clergyman of the Church of England, and Thomas Helwys, a wealthy layman who worked side by side with Smyth. Both men were reared as Anglicans (Episcopalians), and like many in the early seventeenth century, they also wanted to see church reform. With the Bible as their guide, Smyth and Helwys sought to restore a biblical model of the church.

Originally based in Gainsborough, England, Helwys and Smyth journeyed to Holland in search of religious liberty. During their journey they formulated a theology that emphasized baptism. As a result, the Baptist tradition was born. Even though the Black church was clearly growing, she would not gain her identity without key leaders' major contributions. Their leadership ensured future generations were empowered and equipped to maintain the church's success. The Black church is rooted in Rev. Richard Allen and Rev. Absalom Jones, who both founded the African American independent churches and of the American Civil Rights movement. Allen's position gave him the opportunity to travel around the country allowing him to build a foundation for other leaders to embrace and import. Both clergymen embraced their role in leading the early Black church. Jones led a powerful prayer meeting that raised citizens' excitement and inquiry causing them to be ashamed of their conduct. These two early pioneers went to great lengths to demonstrate, model, and uphold the banner of succession.

Facing excommunication from the "mother church," they remained united and strong. Allen stirringly recounts the situation. He states, "Here we were pursued with threats of being disowned and read publicly out of meeting if we did continue to worship in the place we had hired; but we believed the Lord would be our friend. Here was the beginning and rise of the first African church in America."[9] Some twenty years later, when increasing numbers of African Americans could not worship without harassment in the Methodist Church, Allen and others called a conference that established the first African denomination in America. It was resolved "That the people of Philadelphia, Baltimore, etc., should become one body, under the name of the African Methodist Episcopal Church."[10]

Black Baptists

Even though there were many branches of Black Baptist, their commitment to training, mantle passing, and legacy were visible in each. These organizations have sought to address, as well as meet, the sociological, theological, educational, political, and liturgical needs of Black Baptists. The history of Black Baptist associations and conventions is rich, empowering, and, at times, troublesome. The Black Baptists were very active, along with other denominations, in the great work of uplifting humankind, especially that part of humankind with which the church was ostensibly identified. No other pulpit movement ever had a more difficult task or labored under greater

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[9] Bob Kellemen, "The MLK of Their Day: Richard Allen and Absalom Jones," https://rpmministries.org/2020/01/richard-allen-and-absalom-jones-the-mlk-of-their-day/.

[10] Kellemen, "The MLK of Their Day."

disadvantages than the black Baptists. In the very beginning, the pulpit had the leadership and the enlightenment of the race in spiritual and intellectual knowledge thrust upon it, when it was neither qualified nor regularly organized to perform such tasks.[11]

The Black Baptist church continues to be rich in assets. It is not without its challenges, however, as it contemplates its future. One challenge for the Black Baptist church is the rapidly changing religious landscape. A growing number of individuals are no longer committed to organized religion. Grey Matter Research and Consulting found that seven out of ten regular churchgoers in the United States would be at least somewhat open to switching denominations if they could no longer attend their current church because of moving or some other reason. Several years ago, it was not uncommon for a denominational label to play a vital role in someone selecting a particular congregation. Today, few people will remain at a church because of its denomination. This has resulted in many Black Baptist churches choosing not to include their denominational identity in the church's name while still maintaining their Baptist doctrine and beliefs. Furthermore, America is now much more diverse as it pertains to faith traditions. Black Baptists must grapple with the wide range of beliefs within those faith traditions, plus a myriad of denominations and other subgroupings that also exist. Christianity is no longer the dominant religion in America. Religious fluidity has brought about schisms, mergers, and the arrival of other non-Christian beliefs from other traditions and cultures that have become a growing presence on the American religious landscape — having grown from roughly one percent in the 1970s to nearly five percent today.

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[11] Leroy Fitts, *A History of Black Baptists* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1985), 163–164.

Black Baptists must also acknowledge the growing number of Black women who are both called and trained for ministry. Black women have a strong presence in both the academy and the church. As a Black pastor and seminary professor, I witness this reality in those settings every day. Many students in my classes are women, and since its conception, women have outnumbered Black men in the church I serve. Black women are attending seminary at a greater rate than Black men and contribute significantly to the ministry of the Black church. If the Black Baptist church continues to require pastors who are seminary-trained, we will see greater dependence on women clergy and the inclusion of women as pastors in the future. Regardless of the growing number of called and trained Black women, gender inequity, disapproval, and male hegemony continue to dominate pastoral leadership in Baptist churches.

Consider the following from an article, *God in America: The Black Church*:

> "Though women are gradually entering the diaconate and pastorate ministries, many Black Baptist churches continue to question women's roles in the church, particularly that of pastor. The vocal and visual support for women clergy among African American denominations—such as African Methodist Episcopal Zion (AMEZ), African Methodist Episcopal (AME), and Christian Methodist Episcopal (CME)—may lead to an exodus of Black Baptist women clergy who are looking to be both supported and affirmed from complementarian or Black Baptist churches that believe men and women are equal in personhood but created for different roles in the church. Gender inclusivity must be welcomed and implemented, and Black Baptist churches that support women in ministry must advocate on behalf of women clergy if the Black Baptist church is to thrive."[12]

The article also reveals Black people in northern states were able to rule their religious organizations more than their counterparts in the South. Still, they mostly

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[12] God in America: The Black Church, https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/godinamerica-black-church/.

worshipped with whites and still considered second-class citizens. By the eighteenth century, Black people began to meet by themselves and later organized ways to help themselves. They established African Societies to aid those in need. The article further posits:

> "Functioning as quasi-religious organizations, these societies often gave rise to independent black churches. In 1787, for example, Richard Allen and Absalom Jones organized the Free African Society of Philadelphia, which later evolved into two congregations: the Bethel Church, the mother church of the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) denomination, and St. Thomas Episcopal Church, which remained affiliated with a white Episcopal denomination. These churches continued to grow. Historian Mary Sawyer notes that by 1810, there were 15 African churches representing four denominations in 10 cities from South Carolina to Massachusetts. Women generally were not permitted to preach. One notable exception was Jarena Lee, who became an itinerant preacher, traveling thousands of miles and writing her own spiritual autobiography."[13]

Some of these practices the current church still faces and limits the potential leadership pool that can come from a healthy succession plan, especially when Black women make up over two-thirds of the church body. Historically, even as women did most of the work, they were not considered for leadership development or preaching. The men controlled the clergy and pulpit ministry in those churches.

Among the most influential women was Nannie Burroughs, who served as corresponding secretary of the Woman's Convention of the National Baptist Convention, U.S.A. In a major 1920 address to the Convention Burroughs argued:

> "We might as well be frank and face the truth. While we have hundreds of superior men in the pulpits, North and South, East and West, the majority of our religious leaders have preached too much Heaven and too little practical Christian living. In many, the spirit of greed, like the horse-leach, is ever crying, 'Give me, give me, give me.' Does the absorbing task of supplying their personal needs bind leaders to the moral, social, and spiritual needs of our people?"*[14]*

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[13] God in America: The Black Church.

[14] "The Black Church," https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/godinamerica-black-church/.

The strength of the Black Baptist church is local autonomy, unity without uniformity, and oneness without onerous authority. Every Black Baptist church is free from governmental control over faith and religious practice. Although Black Baptist churches and organizations evolved from a need to address the inequities caused by racism and racial discrimination, they have survived internal and external struggles, overcome theological and doctrinal differences, faced challenges and disappointments, addressed moral dilemmas and mismanaged leaderships, and endured schisms, divisions, and splits among its own local churches, associations, and conventions. All these examples speak of the strength of the Black church, and it may seem as if there was a consistent line of improvement but that would not be the case. In Woodson's writings, there is a history of many challenges to the leadership mantle-passing process. He would share that there were some internal issues that would hinder their progression. Wortham makes a critical comment connected to the approach of any problem. That is, he says, "There is only one sure basis of social reform, and that is Truth—a careful, detailed knowledge of the essential facts of each social problem. Without this there is no logical starting place for reform and uplift".[15]

According to Woodson,

> "one such issue was the fact that because of many undesirable situations here and there in the church comparatively few young men have, during the last decade or so, aspired to this work. Some young Black ministers have learned to look upon the calling as a necessary nuisance. Except in church schools where the preparation for the ministry is an objective, it has often been unusual to find one Negro student out of a hundred aspiring to the ministry, and too often those who have such aspirations represent the inferior intellect of the group, as it happened in the church during the Middle Ages. So rapidly did the ministry fall into discredit in many quarters a few years ago that most women of promise would not

[15] Wortham, *W. E. B. Du Bois and the Sociology of the Black Church and Religion*, 249.

> dare to engage themselves to men who thought of becoming clergymen; and, if the marital connection happened to be affected before the lot of the bride was known, it was in many cases considered a calamity."[16]

Such an issue prevented fresh new ideas as well as charismatic Christian leaders from emerging. Another issue was finding the balance between doctrinal disciplines and political pursuits. This caused some divisions among Black church leaders and led to other denominations to rise leaving some congregations to have less of an impact on the communities as they once did. However, it seems that God always sent the right leaders to lead the church into a season of revival and the biblical and doctrinal methodologies to be reborn. One pivotal individual was Samuel DeWitt Proctor, who began to challenge the church leadership to see training as a necessary key to a healthy and sustainable legacy.

Proctor was an African American minister, educator, and humanitarian. As an African American church and higher education leader, he was active in the Civil Rights Movement and is perhaps best known as a mentor and friend of Martin Luther King Jr. He was mentored by the late Reverend Dr. BG Crawley. Proctor then went on to mentor to some of the Greatest preaching minds of our time. The names of Sandy Ray, Gardner C. Taylor, William A. Jones, Wyatt T Walker, and EK Baily are just some of the few. Proctor went on to be one of the most influential models of receiving the leadership mantle and then one who would initiate a balance with the political and educational and was necessary to the beginning of the Black church reemerging. He connected the thoughts of Carter G. Woodson who said, "In the contest between selfishness and godliness the former has been victor in the soul of the American and European. There are those like Bishop John Hurst believing that the Negro church must play the role of keeping the fire burning on the altar

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[16] Woodson, *The History of the Negro Church*, 898-899.

until the day when men again become reverent, and that the Negro's liberal interpretation of the Christian religion, based upon the brotherhood of man and the fatherhood of God, must gain ascendancy and be accepted by a regenerated world of to-morrow."[17] Proctor mentored Gardner C. Taylor and countless others, trailblazed the way, and delivered a template that can be replicated for the success of future generations. Dennis Dickerson writes, "The urge for theological orthodoxy and better preacher preparation provided the impetus for these white preaching schools. Economics, however, along with the dire need for skilled leaders, apparently prompted African Americans in Churches of Christ to launch their own 'schools of preaching.'"[18] This methodology to establish schooling for the black preacher set the foundation for future generations to be academically competitive and prepared even though the economy was not working in their favor.

Other historical data shows that Black churches and the academy have already done considerable work in this area, but going forward, it will take a monumental effort of collaboration with the youth themselves and public and private partnerships alongside other civil society institutions. Leadership, in this respect, must be construed as communities of discourse and practices where all parties congregate, conjure, and conspire in common(s) that are constructed for strategic purposes, addressing public policy, and aligning with public and private partners. Citizenship training that is local, national, and global is necessary to ensure that the futures of young people and the future of this society are not limited by narrow, nostalgic, and exclusive visions of statehood. Nevertheless, the strength

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[17] Woodson, *The History of the Negro Church*, 900-901.

[18] Dennis C. Dickerson, "Robinson, Edward J., Hard-Fighting Soldiers: A History of African American Churches of Christ," *Church History* 89, no. 3 (2020): 142.

of Black Baptists endures, firmly rooted in their rich legacy of being socially conscious, such that they can collectively sing the words of the late Rev. James Cleveland who penned, "I don't feel no ways tired. I've come too far from where I started from. Nobody told me that the road would be easy. I don't believe He [God] brought me this far to leave me."[19]

Currently, it appears more churches are engaging in intentional pastoral mantle-passing or torch-passing. For example, Pastor James Meeks while standing in the pulpit on Sunday, January 8, 2023, at the House of Hope, the home of Chicago's Salem Baptist Church, held a symbolic glass torch to pass the mantle to the Rev. Charlie Dates, who would succeed him as leader of one of the city's largest churches. Meeks pastored Salem for thirty-eight years before retiring. "Meeks said he wanted to leave while his church was still doing well. The Rev. Charlie Dates, who grew up at Salem, will become pastor of one of Chicago's largest congregations. The 'new norm' is not that pastors and leaders hold their titles until they pass on, but rather, they begin to look within, training and equipping persons from within to receive the torch and accept the mantle of leaders."[20] The powerful presence of the pulpit leading the charge for change in the political realm cannot be overlooked. Many of the larger churches were more respected from a political standpoint. This meant that a handful of ministers led the charge, however it was because of the leadership of their predecessors that place them within a healthy position to lead the next generation. "In the end, the work of community empowerment and liberation in black America requires far more than what institutional black religion alone can hope to

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[19] James Cleveland, vocalist, "I Don't Feel No Ways Tired," recorded 1978, with the Salem Inspirational Choir, Savoy Records.

[20] Bob Smietana, "Chicago Pastor James Meeks Bids a Tearful Farewell After 38 Years at Salem Baptist," https://religionnews.com/2023/01/09/chicago-pastor-james-meeks-bids-a-tearful-farewell-after-38-years-at-salem-baptist/.

accomplish. Still, there is every good reason to conclude that African American communities of faith will continue to be a strong source of solidarity and a potent force for progressive social change in an unjust social order."[21]

Motivations of Historically Black Colleges and Universities' Leaders

For additional support to this historical framework conjunction with the history of the Black church, we will briefly examine the motivations of the founders of HBCUs. "Historically discerned, scholars, and teachers of the Christian faith in the black church tradition have observed the unique role black preachers played in the life and culture of the community. Iconoclastic in breaking traditional beliefs held by the dominant culture in America, the role of the black preacher is both spiritual and moral."[22] It was highly important to have the mentees be handpicked and carefully selected. To be transparent sometimes in history individuals who were selected, were put into place either unequipped or they did not possess the same vision and passion as those who place them. The damage of making the wrong selection could cause major regression within the black church and its movements.

The good news is there are more examples of individuals who held on to the core values, the mission and the vision, and never lost sight of that as they led their respective groups and congregations. This helped for the African American church and institutions like our HBCUs to continue to thrive having a smooth transition and empowering the next

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[21] Drew R. Smith and Fredrick C. Harris, *Black Churches and Local Politics: Clergy Influence, Organizational Partnerships, and Civic Empowerment* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2005), 20.

[22] E. Hammond Oglesby, *Pressing toward the Mark: Christian Ethics for the Black Church Today* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2007), 288.

generation to lead effectively. Every HBCU that was founded during the Reconstruction Era was created with the purpose of training newly freed African slaves how to be leaders of our race. Each HBCU founder had different individual motivations for developing these Black men and women into leaders. One great resource that helps to provide an excellent timeline and skeletal system is found in James Anderson's book, *The Education of Blacks in the South, 1860-35*. The initial building block of this time was the rise of universal education in the South. This universal education blueprint that was formed in the South was created to combat the educational differences and inequalities to the white citizens. African Americans had limited access to quality schools and resources. Without the proper education and no succession plan for education, African Americans as a people would be vulnerable to having an even worse level of quality of life. They also faced several policies that kept them segregated, as well as displayed high levels of discrimination. This was intentionally done to support limiting black students with opportunities that will be well within their right to have as citizens of the United States. African American communities, which primarily consisted of educators and religious leaders, came together to actively provide a succession plan or model that would give black students The tools they needed to become full-functioning citizens within their society.

It was during the Reconstruction Era that the foundations of meaningful advancements in educational openings Began to rise. This unified effort was the beginning for the integration of schools. With a system in place, leaders of certain institutions worked very hard twin bed quality principles and foundational practices for these institutions. What was birthed from this, was the emergence of what we now call historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs). These HBCUs were integral and necessary to provide higher

education opportunities for black students during a time that was so heavily dominated by discriminatory practices and policies that prevented access to larger universities and institutions. A new system which became known as the Hampton Model of Normal Industrial Education was born. Samuel Armstrong, who was a Yankee, and Booker T. Washington, a former slave, both birthed and nurtured this education model. Anderson shares, "Thus in his establishment of the Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute, he was neither unconscious nor contrarious, but honest. The institute's curriculum, values, and ethos represented his social class and ideology as properly as the moral foundation of the Sabbath schools, free schools, public schools, and colleges represented the social and cultural values of the ex-slaves."[23] The institutions of Hampton and Tuskegee led the way in creating a curriculum that would be revolutionary not only to the black community but also to the United States as a whole. Literally, all the HBCUs to come their foundational principles and structures upon this model of leadership and plan for educational succession. Even though the HBCUs were making progress, the emergence of Jim Crow laws and other segregation policies produced resegregation of schools and made the gap of educational disparities between black and white students remained problematic. Bradley introduces a model of succession that was not only used in the black church but was also seen in the institution of HBCUs that has increased in our present day and, if followed, will continue generations. The following observations are separated according to the three states of being and identity within my academic career: student, faculty, and dean."[24] His footprint that begins with an individual first beginning as a student seems rather rudimentary. However,

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[23] Anderson, *The Education of Blacks in the South 1860-1935,* 203-24.

[24] Anthony B. Bradley, *Black Scholars in White Space: New Vistas in African American Studies from the Christian Academy* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2015), 96.

without this consistently monitored system overseen by wise mentors will break the mold of this succession model of leadership and will have negative effects on future generations.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the historical data of the Black church displays several key factors that are critical to the support of my project. Bill Terry provides this illustration in an article, "Just as the Olympic flame symbolizes the light of spirit, knowledge, and life, so does the passing of the mantle to future church leaders symbolize the light of God's direction, education, and maturation for the church. By passing the flame from one person to another in stages, history expresses the handing down of this symbolic fire from generation to generation. If is my belief that the Apostle Paul had this idea in mind when he encouraged his young protégé Timothy."[25] Paul in 2 Timothy 1:6 writes, "For this reason, I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands." The imagery this passage conveys spiritual impartation, passion, passing the torch, a leader in one generation cheering on a torchbearer in the next generation. The challenge within the my targeted context is Southern Missionary Baptist Church's current leadership has failed to train younger members in leadership. The current leadership is up in age and doesn't have the energy or the mindset to properly train next-generation leaders, which has caused the church's growth to be stunted.

When leadership is intentional about training, educating, and preparing younger generations with hands (right now involvement), those leaders prove to carry on the duties,

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[25] Bill Terry, "Passing the Torch: We Prayerfully Value All Generation," June 10, 2018, https://iphc.org/discipleship/2018/06/10/passing-the-torch/.

doctrines, and disciplines needed to have a sustainable legacy and longevity. When leadership fails to this, regardless of the reasons (i.e., ignorance, selfishness, arrogance), the generation fails to meet the expectations and puts its existence in peril. Great leaders pass the torch.

The historical information provided by both mantle-passing models within the Black Church and educational succession plans in the HBCUs affirms the necessity of such models for communities and their people to have productive lives and meaningful opportunities to provide for generations to come. Using the skeletal system from both models will provide an important and critical part of the DMin project that will follow these documents. The collaboration of the Black community and its leaders to liberate, educate, and then empower their members created a generation model that has current and future effects. It was during the Reconstruction that leaders of various HBCUs modeled a succession of leaders by growing and grooming A generation of new leaders within their respective institutions to guarantee a smooth transition of leadership. Due to their important contribution, present and future generations of Black Americans now have and will have access to higher education. A great example of this type of planning was seen in the case of John Langston, the first president of what is now Virginia State University, as he handpicked John Oliver Crosby to be his successor. Crosby was well trained and ready for the position and carried on not only the promotion of higher education but also a legacy for civil rights for African Americans. Once again, history has shown us the way by providing and reminding us of the great sacrifices of those who've gone before us to ensure our president and open doors for our future. Walter Fluker says, “I am proposing that we provide an opportunity for a new generation of black church leaders, scholars, and,

importantly, youth activists to reflect upon tools of the spirit that might assist us in liberating madness through conjuring practices of culture and religious experience."[26] In order for the next generation to go and grow, they will need to reflect on the tools of the spirit and who better to teach this than those who the spirit has brought carried to this present day.

[26] Walter E. Fluker, *The Ground Has Shifted: The Future of the Black Church in Post-Racial America* (New York, NY: University Press, 2016), 273.

CHAPTER FOUR

THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS

This Theological Foundation paper will focus on Ecclesiology and cover beliefs and practices within the Baptist tradition as well as insight into the historical development, and how history now affects the Church, people, and faith practices. Based upon the previously stated context, problem statement and hypothesis regarding the importance of leadership succession, it is important that we establish a theological concept or theme on which we base this foundation.

This Theological Foundation paper begins by reaffirming the problem statement: The Southern Missionary Baptist Church of Cincinnati, Ohio, has no succession plan for ministry leadership. If the senior pastor and existing leadership participate in several seminars about leadership succession, they will be equipped to identify the ministry context's future leadership needs. The biblical foundation has already been established using the scripture passage found in the Book of Numbers 27:12-23.

The theme of this paper centers on Ecclesiology, the study of the church. Additionally, attention must be focused on several theological sub-perspectives, which include (1) the nature of the Church, (2) ordination, and (3) discipleship. It is necessary to compare how multiple theologies address these sub-perspectives and see what information and methodologies they suggest that the Church should utilize when selecting and training future leaders.

The word Ecclesiology comes from two Greek words meaning "assembly" and "word"— combining to mean "the study of the church." The church is the assembly of believers who belong to God. Ecclesiology is crucial to understanding God's purpose for believers in the world today.[1] The history will explore the church's beginnings and the development of its leadership throughout its life. This includes, but is not limited to, the development of church administration, Christian ethics, and ongoing Christian Education. The systematic extracts from Practical Theology dive deep into the development of Christian ethics, the foundations of church administration, and the skeletal structure of the training through Christian education. Observing the concepts connected to the early beginnings of church leadership selection and succession will be essential. They understand the model of how Jesus chose his disciples and what the expectation of their work involves. Another exposition shows and establishes a proper foundation for running and growing churches. With many confusing voices telling us how to run or grow our churches, a sound theological and biblical mission is required. It also gives us a historical perspective that can better guide us through the many cultural fads, alternative paradigms, and risky ministry philosophies being marketed today.

There are several factors that must be investigated when looking at ecclesiology. The first is the biblical foundation which deals with the nature of the origin and purpose of the church as explained in the New Testament with Jesus's teachings as well as the biblical narratives of the apostles. Historic development of the church explains and unpacks key historical events, movements, as well as the people who have helped form the church's

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[1] S. Michael Houdmann, ed., *Got Questions?: Bible Questions-Answered-Answers to the Questions People are Really Asking* (Bloomington, IN: Westbow Press, 2014), 171.

practices, governments, beliefs, and structures over the years. An investigation of theological perspectives that deal with the mission of the church, the nature of the church, social justice, evangelical perspectives, and the sacraments. The building blocks that form the organizational systems of the church may include whether it is congregational Episcopal or any other hierarchical model of government. Studying the worship service, liturgical practices, and sacraments in the life of the church helps shape the foundation and formation of the church's universal identity. Also embedded within the study of the church, there must be a clear establishment of its mission core values, and ministry that it is to provide to the world while promoting peace and advocate for justice. Lastly, there should be an examination of the challenges that the modern church faces in its current context as well as responding to them and making succession models for future generations. The crisis at the heart of the church is a crisis of product. This discussion includes teaching churchgoers to discover that they control the destiny of their church, and that personal contentment comes through growing as disciples. Lastly, and most importantly, an exploration of how the Holy Spirit worked through the Apostles, leading and empowering the church to expansive growth. Leadership development, Christian ethics, and Christian Education are all critical to the nature of the project.

The cornerstones and foundations of my project will be informed through the lens of these core foundations and ecclesiology. Using the theoretical and practical areas as a beginning, expanding the theoretical disciplines of Biblical, Historical, and Systematic and the practical disciplines of Christian Ethics, Christian Education, and Church Administration support the problem statement and the hypothesis.

Ecclesiology

Before addressing the importance of succession planning for the church, it is necessary to understand its origins. The New Testament word for church is *ekklesia*, which means "the called-out ones." In classical Greek, the term was used almost exclusively for political gatherings. The church is the community of all true believers since Pentecost. According to this second definition, the church does not include true believers during the time of the Old Testament. There are several passages in scripture that make me think it preferable to say that the church includes all true believers for all time. For example, Paul says, Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her.[2] The phrase "the church" is used to apply to all those whom Christ died to redeem, all those who are saved by the death of Christ.[3] Jesus founded the church when He instructed His disciples, reminding them that "and upon this rock I will build my church."[4] Jesus is the foundation of the church. The Apostle Paul affirms this by calling Jesus the Chief Cornerstone. Jesus then establishes a blueprint for the church to follow as He hand-picks disciples and creates a model succession planning by implanting face-to-face, hands-on training. The beginnings of each disciple's choosing and training were designed to make them "fishers of men." In the book, *"The Training of the Twelve,"* A. B. Bruce states the twelve enrolled in at least three stages of training.[5] The first stage portrays them as simply believers in Him as Christ as occasional

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[2] Ephesians 5:25.

[3] Wayne A. Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Grand Rapids, MI: Inter-Varsity Press 1994), 816.

[4] Matthew 16:18.

[5] Alexander Balmain Bruce, *Training of the Twelve* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1988), 11-12.

companions at events and seasons. In the second stage, fellowship with Christ assumed the form of an uninterrupted attendance on His person, involving entire, or at least habitual, abandonment of secular occupations.[6] Lastly, the Twelve entered the last and highest stage of discipleship when Jesus chose them out of the masses of His followers and became a select band to be trained for the great work of apostleship. This necessary maturation experience couldn't have occurred until all those selected had been around the actual personage of Christ. Jesus was preparing them to continue this training in future disciples to advance the church.

The Nature of the Church

Understanding the nature of the church allows us to see the vast and viable pictures of the true mission of the church, the need for unity and cohesiveness, and the demands of both quantitative and qualitative growth. In his book, *The Nature of the Church,* Earl Radmacher suggests essential theological principles concerning the universal Church. The first deals with the church as the body of Christ. Although the New Testament term "soma" is used in connection with various doctrines, it's the most prominent theological use of the church doctrine. Other images include the Church as the bride, the Church as a building, the Church as a priesthood, the Church as a flock, and the Church as branches.[7]

The greatest of these images is the reference to the body of Christ. This is divided into two significant interpretations. The first is literal, and the other is metaphorical. In the literal sense, the church is seen as an extension of the incarnation of Christ (Catholicism).

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[6] Bruce, *The Training of the Twelve,* 11.

[7] Earl D. Radmacher, *The Nature of the Church* (Hayesville, NC: Schmul Publishing Co., 1996), 223.

In the figurative sense, Christ is seen as the preeminent governmental head of the body. His headship means that he serves as the originating cause and is the source that causes continual and active sustenance and unity for all the members connected to Him. The image of the church as the bride speaks to the vital union between Christ and His church. It is an inseparable relationship of life and love. The picture of the church as a building displays a solid and sufficient structure and that the church represents the household of God. Each member is seen as a living stone that makes up a spiritual house and is secured because it depends on the cornerstone, which gives supernatural support and stability. When the church is seen as a priesthood, it conveys that every believer is seen as a priest before God grants access to the throne of God. This Exalted privilege means that each believer offers themselves as a spiritual sacrifice. The church as a flock emphasizes that Jesus is the chief shepherd and allows oversight to the local church by using under shepherds to the flock.

The under shepherd is limited to a specific local church and is tasked with leading and feeding that specific congregation. Lastly, the church as a branch uniquely contributes to the nature of the church. First, Christ states He is the Vine, and those who follow are disciples liken branches.[8] This is, again, an inseparable relationship. Secondly, the fruit, or new disciples produced results from connectivity to Him and is not accredited to the branch. The branches bear the fruit, and the fruit is the life of Christ Himself, which the Holy Spirit forms in each believer. All of these establish the theological foundations of the nature of the church.

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[8] John 15:5.

The Necessity of Growth

The record found in Acts 2:42 points to the core theological foundations that the church was founded on. The first Christian Pentecost is called the birthday of the Christian church. God used a call-out people, *ekklesia*, in Old Testament, but the *ekklesia* had so to speak, to die with the Messiah and be reborn with him into resurrection life in order to be the community of the new age, the fellowship of the Spirit.[9] The exponential growth that came from that day was built upon the theological structure of the apostles' teaching, the ongoing fellowship, the fervent prayers of the believers, and a genuine communion that produced a community. Stopping with the doctrine of the universal church would neither be true scholarship nor intelligent biblical interpretation, for the body of Christ is not God's working entity in the world today.

God's method of carrying out His purpose through the body's members banded together is known as the local church. God never intended for the local church to be a static organization. Churches are subject to plateaus. A church reaches a plateau when its growth has leveled. When this happens, the church soon begins to decline which means the changes are needed.[10] There must be a demand for unity and growth. This is a significant construct that supports the need for succession planning. Quantitatively, this means that there is numerical growth from the original disciples and serves as each one reaches one mentality. The qualitative idea is that whatever is reproduced from the original disciple

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[9] F. F. Bruce, *Acts: Bible Study Commentary* (Nashville, TN; Bath, England: Kingsley Books, 2017), 686.

[10] C. Peter Wagner, "Introduction," in *Church Growth Made Simple: Twenty Simple Changes Guaranteed to Transform Your Church* (Lithonia, GA), 5.

should not be of lesser value; it should be equal in excellence, worth, and credibility. Thom Rainer reminds us that

God is sovereign. That statement is true theologically and experientially. He is in control of all things, including the churches across our land. In His sovereignty, God chooses certain means, methods, and persons to accomplish His purpose.[11] Everyone who is under his lordship should live up to his divine expectations and secure the future of the church by becoming a follower who then leads others to follow and continues this process to grow the church Jesus hung, bled, and died to save.

Ordination

The content centered around ordination is another critical component in the study of Ecclesiology. In most religious denominations, some form or skeleton separates the laity from the leadership. Generally, it is a three-fold scale. At the top are ordained people; some are appointed and elected, and then there is the general body or congregation. Christian pastoral care is sharply distinguished from the services rendered by civil religion. It is not a service rendered to Caesar or political operatives or business interests. It is a spiritual office for the well-being of the church, entrusted with three primary areas of responsibility: word, sacrament, and pardon.[12] The foundation of a succession leadership model must be built upon the shoulders of Christian pastors who truly recognize and demonstrate pastoral care in reference to the passion for others to develop. Too many pastors have become entangled in their positions only, not the people they have been called, chosen, and

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[11] Thom S. Rainer, High Expectations (Nashville, TN: B&H Books, 1999), 74.

[12] Thomas C. Oden, *Becoming a Minister*, Classic Pastoral Care (New York, NY: Crossroad, 1987), 20.

commissioned to serve. The first group is those who are ordained. These are generally ministers and deacons. This is because these offices are supported by scripture. Biblical support passages for pastors, elders, or shepherds have many foundational passages undergirding their need for ordination. Consider 1 Peter 5:1-3:

> Now as an elder myself and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as one who shares in the glory to be revealed, I exhort the elders among you to tend the flock of God that is in your charge, exercising the oversight, not under compulsion but willingly, as God would have you do it — not for sordid gain but eagerly. Do not lord it over those in your charge but be examples to the flock.

The most common New Testament term for church leaders is elders. The overall definition is a person who, by virtue of position in the family, clan, or tribe; or by reason of personality, prowess, stature, or influence; or through a process of appointment and ordination, exercised leadership and judicial functions in both religious and secular spheres in the ancient world, both among biblical and nonbiblical peoples. The roots of the development of the presbytery (group of elders) in the New Testament and post-apostolic church originate in Judaism and the Old Testament, though the figure of the elder or groups of elders can also be found in the world surrounding ancient Israel and in the Greco-Roman world of the NT period.[13] In the Old Testament, this was indicative of one who governed a family or one who was a part of a specialized council. In the military, a rank of elders would lead during wartime. However, in the New Testament, it takes on a more specific duty. Elders were faithful, respected individuals who exercised great maturity. They were primarily decision-makers within their communities. A synonymous term was pastor or shepherd who oversaw the preaching and teaching of God's Word. They also provided care

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[13] Walter A. Elwell and Barry J. Beitzel, "Elder," in *Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1988), 679.

for the congregation. Lastly, bishops were overseers who were charged to have integrity, humility, and a love for God's people.

The other biblical office that has substantial support is the office of deacon. The book of Acts serves as the primary foundation for this office. Acts share how these men were chosen and why these men were chosen. The twelve apostles established their priorities and recognized they needed additional help, so they recruited others. With the recruiting of the seven men, the apostles could give their full attention to prayer and the teaching of the Word of God. Like the qualifications of an elder or pastor, the Bible supports these qualifications. Timothy outlines the qualifications in 1 Timothy 3:8-14.

The deacon's office has its origin in the New Testament. While the elder's office adopted from the Jewish synagogue, the early church instituted something new with an order of deacons. The word group surrounding *diakoneō*, "to serve" (*diakonia*, service; *diakonos*, server), initially referred to a waiter at a meal (John 2:5, 9).[14] The qualifications for deacons are like those of overseers, demanding high-quality character (I Tim. 3:8-9). Deacons, though, are not required to teach or manage the church. The third extension of leadership comes from church officers. Contextually, a church officer is publicly recognized tob perform certain functions for the benefit of the whole church.[15] According to this definition, elders and deacons would be considered officers in a church, as would the pastor. The church treasurer and moderator would also be officers; however, these titles may vary from church to church. These people have had public recognition, usually at a service where they are installed or ordained in an office. They need public recognition to

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[14] Walter A. Elwell, *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2001), 320.

[15] Wayne A. Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 905.

fulfill their responsibilities. The question is then raised about how these and other leaders are selected. The first response should come by way of the hierarchy of a leader to choose or appoint members willing to partner with leadership to fulfill the will of the church and aid those in the membership. Adversely, leader who do not have the same mind can become adversarial and divisive, which could alienate, ostracize, and even cause schisms within one's administration and church. The Bible also supports congregational participation in the selection of these officers. Another reason for congregational involvement in the selection of church officers is that in the New Testament, generally, the final governing authority seems to rest not with any group outside or within the church but with the church. The final step in church discipline before excommunication is to "tell it to the church."[16] Excommunication, or the act of excluding someone from the fellowship of the church, is done when the whole congregation comes together and decides. If the entire congregation selects the officers of the church, there is more accountability to the congregation. Paul assumed some level of accountability when he provided that "two or three witnesses"[17] could bring a charge of wrongdoing against an elder. This accountability provides an additional safeguard against temptations to sin and excessive lust for power. Succession planning requires a healthy hybrid of these principles to help maintain harmony and unity among the whole church. The glue that holds any clergy, deacon, trustee, servant-leader, and anyone else is under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, Christian maturity, and Christian ethics, moral standards of right and wrong based on the teachings of Jesus Christ, the Old Testament prophets, and the New Testament apostles.

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[16] Matthew 18:17.

[17] 1 Timothy 5:19.

Discipleship Making as a Pastor

For the next generation to succeed and sustain, the current generation must be committed to a robust discipleship model. It appeared further that these successions have been regarded by the church writers, with an unanimity and to an extent which hardly admit of being exaggerated, as an essential element of her corporate life.[18] Current leadership should be intentional about selecting and training. John Maxwell states, "The higher the leadership ability, the greater the potential. The lower the leadership ability, the lower the impact."[19] With that principle in the forefront, the pastor must be the visible model of discipleship making. Leaders must be able to assess what is needed. After the need is established, a conflict must be addressed before the pastor can begin making disciples. The characteristics of discipleship-making should be intentional, measurable, and communicated. The benefits are only realized when the ministry has reached maturity, typically after a minimum of five years. Studies reveal the most productive pastoral years are between years four and seven. Making disciples takes time, the results come slower, and its validity requires long-term work.[20] The disciple-making pastor must be committed to this work. Being the disciple-making pastor is the most challenging work in the church. There are several conflicts that the disciple-making pastor will encounter, such as the liberal church, misconceptions about discipleship, weak non-professional leadership, a

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[18] Charles Gore and C. H. Turner, *The Church and the Ministry*, 4th ed. (London, UK: Longmans, Green and Co., 1919), 298–299.

[19] John C. Maxwell. *21 Laws of Leadership in the Bible: Learning to Lead From the Men and Women of Scripture* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2018), 18.

[20] Bill Hull, *The Disciple Making Pasto: The Key to Building Healthy Christians in Today's Church* (Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revel Co., 1988), 29.

church that has not taken the Great Commission seriously, clericalism, polity in any extreme, accommodation to the current culture, conformation to secular methodologies and the major discipleship killer, traditionalism. The disciple-making pastor sees the big picture of the church in God's redemptive drama as a result. The pastor also understands the model, the means, method, and motive of making Christ known. Jesus was the ultimate pastor and trainer. Not only how he called the disciples and how he chose his disciples but how he commissioned them is unique. John Butler pulls out a major nuance in how Jesus did this. He points out that Mark is the only Gospel to report that the twelve disciples were sent out in pairs. Mark said Christ sent "them forth by two and two" (Mark 6:7). We note two things about this pairing of the disciples for this commission. They are the partners in the pairing and the profitableness of the pairing.[21] Then Matthew lists those pairings. This is critical to the methodology that I will use to implement in the project. Two learning how to thrive as one.

Discipleship Definition and Characteristics

As it pertains to the pastor being a key person in the life of making, marking and mentoring disciples, it is clear that a perfect relationship must take place between the called and chosen pastor and God Himself. God, being perfect, has capacity for perfect friendship. Man, with his imperfections, can never quite know perfection in anything, least of all in his relationship to the incomprehensible Godhead.[22] However, even with this relationship, the disciple-making pastor is not enough. In an article by Global Disciples entitled, "The

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[21] John G. Butler, *Studies of the Savior*, *vol. 5: Jesus Christ: His Disciples* (Clinton, IA: LBC Publications, 2003), 182.

[22] A. W. Tozer and Gerald B. Smith, *Men Who Met God* (Camp Hill, PA: WingSpread, 1986), 13.

Four Characteristics of Discipleship," the author suggests that the pastor cannot accomplish this by himself. It says, "He must have committed believers who understand the cost of their discipleship."[23] The Bible defines it multiple times, but the most prominent definition is found in Luke 14, which suggests that a disciple has surrendered to Jesus Christ. The disciple also loves the Lord and is wholly dedicated to Him. Therefore, a call to discipleship begins with choosing Christ's standards and values for living rather than the world's standards. To produce true disciples, one must teach and model the first and most important characteristic or step of loving God above all else. This cannot be passed down in succession only by a verbal command, but rather, the teaching must be a valid example of this same truth. The follower must be shown the steps from membership to discipleship and leadership. He understood that with each step up, one becomes more accountable. As one steps up, one must also give up. The bigger the title, the lower one becomes as a faithful servant. Regarding discipleship, Jesus in Mark 12:29-31, "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it. For what will it profit them if they gain the whole world but forfeit their life? Or what will they give in return for their life?"

Next involves following God's will. Again, this is more than lip service; it submits oneself to humility and obedience. The third step requires each believer to submit to God and God's Word. Ultimately, a true disciple of Christ must submit to God's Word, the Bible, since He has given his people to speak, to guide, to encourage, to teach, to correct,

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[23] Global Disciples, "The Four Characteristics of True Disciples of Jesus," (blog), March 25, 2022, https://www.globaldisciples.ca/blog/the-4-characteristics-of-a-true-disciple/.

and to give hope. It reveals Him, His will, and all His great and precious promises.[24] A disciple of Jesus submits to the Word of God to experience the true joyfulness found in Him.

The last step is one of the hardest to take but is necessary for true discipleship to emerge. They must embrace suffering. A true disciple of Christ fully embraces suffering to follow the path God has laid out for them. Jesus Christ did just that since He is the model for disciples. Being one of Jesus' true disciples is not easy to accomplish. It will mean that one must set aside one's agenda and plans for the more excellent work Jesus has for you and the greater good you will serve. Hardship and sacrifice are companions for this type of work; however, along the way, joy, peace, purpose, hope, and an eternal influence beyond your wildest and most profound imagination. The *identity* of the church is necessary for the *mission* of the church. Only as a holy nation, called out of darkness into the light of God's presence, can the church discharge its mission.[25] Too many churches lose sight of this because the church confuses the issue of church work with the work of the church. Church work is what the church decides what the priority for the collective is. The work of the church is what Jesus clearly defined as its mission. This hinders the growth of the church when the mission is lost in church events and activities that don't produce the results of the kingdom as Christ defined it.

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[24] Global Disciples, https://www.globaldisciples.ca/blog/the-4-characteristics-of-a-true-disciple/.

[25] Edmund P. Clowney, The Church, ed. Gerald Bray (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1995), 162.

Preparation for Making Mature Disciples:

Taking very seriously the qualifications of maturity outlined by Paul is one of the most important leadership principles that emerges from the biblical story. It should be a priority principle. It's the key to modeling Christlike behavior for the people in the church. It is also the key to creating love and unity and one-mindedness among all the elders as they lead the church to carry out the Great Commission.[26] Having mature disciples is essential to a strong succession plan for future generations. But it would be best if you asked several critical questions. What are we supposed to be doing? How are we doing? Whose job or responsibility, is it? How did Jesus make disciples? How did the church make disciples? This starts with the church realizing its mission, the Great Commission. Jesus was clear about his intentions for his church. The mission is not just to teach or preach. It wasn't evangelism alone. He expects his entire church to move people along a mature or disciple-making continuum from pre-birth (unbelief) to the new birth (belief) and then to full maturity.[27] Those within the church are called to mark and make disciples at home and abroad. Research shows that over eighty to eighty-five percent of churches have plateaued or significantly declined. This may be because discipleship is considered an event rather than a process. The Christian is always in process, including setbacks and progress toward Christian maturity. So, defining it means that it is the process that involves leading unbelievers to faith in Christ so that they become disciples. This means it is an ongoing

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[26] Gene A. Getz, *Elders and Leaders: God's Plan for Leading the Church* (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2003), 244–245.

[27] Aubrey Malphurs, *Strategic Disciple Making: A Practical Tool for Successful Ministry* Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Publishing Group, 2009), 35.

process that encourages us to follow Christ and become more like him. This means none of us have arrived at full maturation. So, who is responsible? First and foremost, God is. If God is not involved in the process, it will not happen. I am referring to the Godhead, for each has a unique duty. Then, it falls on every Christian. The Godhead is involved in making disciples, but each Christian is responsible for their development as a disciple. Again, new birth only serves as "first base" in this process. Too many young believers start at their new birth and stay stagnant at that stage (membership). They either don't push themselves, or no one pushes them. However, each is responsible for reaching full maturity. Finally, and most importantly, not only does the Godhead and each disciple have the responsibility, but the church also has a responsibility. If the church doesn't fulfill its part, succession for the next generations is lost. Here's the key: each individual is responsible for being a growing disciple, but the church is responsible for helping its members grow as disciples. While the disciple's role is personal and individual, the church's role is public and corporate. The church must provide a process for discipleship to occur. It must come alongside and help! For this to take place, the discipleship-making process must be biblical. If we are Christocentric in our core values, modeling what Jesus did is critical. What did Jesus do? Well, Jesus, in his teaching, first made a separation between the crowd and his disciples. This separation solidified that they were in the world but not in the world. When we look at the life of Jesus, he demonstrated discipleship methods and intended for it to be a succession plan as well. He interacted with the crowd (large group), with a small group (the Twelve), with an even smaller group (Inner circle), and with one-to-one sessions. He preached to the crowd. He poured into his focused small group of the Twelve. He poured even more of his life into his smaller inner circle as he spent time alone with them. Jesus

counseled individuals one-on-one. Additionally, establishing strong relationships with those we disciple is another key component and those in our employ. Developing good staff relationships should be of primary concern when a church has several people working together in staff leadership. These relationships will involve all paid staff members to some extent. This is especially true when a team approach is taken. In addition, those who provide ministerial leadership will desire closer relationships with one another as a means of becoming more effective in their work.[28] If there is going to be a healthy relationship between the pastor and their staff, a great part of their success will be on how well they develop a good working relationship. Just because you are the leader doesn't mean people will follow you. You must put in the work required to ensure that the relationship is established and maintained.

Process for Making Mature Disciples:

Once the church's structure has been established with good leadership, administration has to follow. Good administration begins with purpose and moves next to objectives. Objectives bring the purpose concept one step nearer to where the action begins in a church's work. Objectives are defined in terms of ultimate results rather than immediate goals.[29] The purpose is what, and the plans and procedures are the hows. This is a part of the preparation necessary to implement the leadership succession model that will shape the leaders for the next generation. Once again, there is no one better to make mature disciples

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[28] William G. Caldwell, "Staff Relationships," in *Church Administration Handbook*, ed. Bruce P. Powers, 3rd ed. (Nashville, TN: B&H Academic, 2008), 277.

[29] Charles Tidwell, *Church Administration: Effective Leadership for Ministry* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 1985), 87.

than Jesus. Jesus had established a model for ministry using the disciples as a foundational administration of progressive purpose-driven ministry.

With Jesus's and the church's message and methods for making disciples in mind, you, as a concerned leader in your church, whether a pastor, staff person, or teacher, are ready to design a clear strategy for making mature disciples. First, you will determine what a mature disciple would look like in your church context. This will explain why you do what you do, that is, your church's primary ministries. Next, you will evaluate and work with your current primary ministries that are in place to make disciples. Lastly, you will develop a way to measure your progress in making disciples. Fourth, you will address how to staff your church to make disciples. Finally, you will discover how to develop a church budget to make this happen[30]. Each step is critical to the transitions of leadership. The transition is considerably smoother when a succession model for ministry is in place and then carried out without alteration. The apostle Paul had a unique way of engaging his followers. He was able to do this because he saw them as communities. Paul expresses authority among his communities by persuading them to accept his point of view. He does not try to coerce his converts. His persuasion is based on his capacity to convince them by word and example that he desires for them only what the gospel requires.[31] Many newly planted churches placed the word church and replaced it with community. This moves the believer beyond a building and into a truer essence of the meaning of the original word. This aids the succession model because successors are already known to the community and our not perceived as outsiders and supports the goal of there being a smooth transition of leadership.

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[30] Malphurs, *Strategic Disciple Making,* 38.

[31] Robert J. Banks, *Paul's Idea of Community: Spirit and Culture in Early House Churches*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Publishing Group, 2020), 155.

Biblically, we are instructed to do things decently and in order. One of the benefits of intentional leadership succession is that things can be done both with godly integrity and with godly order. The transition from Moses to Joshua was an orderly one. Moses handpicked Joshua, mentored him, and gave him challenging developmental experiences. Apparently, there was no rival for the leadership of the organization, so there was none of the competition for the throne that can result in dissension and internal weakness.[32] The process of making mature disciples revolves around the fact there must be two key roles, they are disciples and mentors. Defining the terms helps to centralize this concept.

A disciple is one who learns to follow the teaching and training of another. A mentor builds a relationship with a less knowledgeable disciple to help the disciple grow in theoretical and practical knowledge and understanding.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this theological theme is essential to my project as it supports the foundational aspect of succession planning for future generations by establishing a firm foundation that emerges from this theological theme of Ecclesiology. This theological theme affirms the need for focused attention through several theological sub-perspectives, which include (1) the nature of the Church, (2) Ordination, and (3) Discipleship. This theme allows me to compare how multiple theologies address these sub-perspectives and see what information and methodologies they suggest that the Church should utilize when selecting and training future leaders. Support biblically comes from the Book of Acts, and other

[32] Lorin Woolfe, The *Bible on Leadership: From Moses to Matthew—Management Lessons for Contemporary Leaders* (New. York, NY: AMACOM, 2023), 210.

passages help track and reinforce my project. The book of Acts helps to support the leadership succession model for shaping future leaders in various ways. It is important to see the appointment and selection process that is seen throughout the entire book. The leaders are appointed and anointed to carry out the mission of the church, the evangelic work of spreading the gospel beginning in Jerusalem, in some areas in Judea, and ultimately to the uttermost parts of the world. Throughout the book, we see that the process is intentional and deliberate, and it shows the importance of why such a plan is necessary in order for the next generation to survive. Just like in the previous foundational papers, we see a continual theme of training and mentoring leaders. Whether this comes from examples like Barnabas and Paul, there is a hands-on approach to developing opportunities for future leaders. It is important to note that this can only take place when there are experienced mentors guiding younger individuals through this process. Lastly and most importantly, it is critical to not only empower these younger leaders, but they must be sent forth with purpose and with power. Giving them the tools to enhance their talents without releasing them to do the actual work defeats the whole purpose of the succession model for ministry. It defeats the whole purpose of why they're being shaped at all. They must be given the opportunity while they have mentors to assist them if there's to be longevity within the church leadership. Historically, this theme will explore the church's beginnings and the development of its leadership throughout the church's life. This is inclusive of but not limited to the development of church administration, Christian ethics, and ongoing Christian Education. Systematically, the context extracts from the area in practical theology with deep dives into the development of Christian ethics, the foundations of Church

Administration, and the skeletal structure of the training through Christian Education. This gives essential information to the framework of my project.

How This Text Informs My Project

The cornerstones and foundations of my project will be informed through the lens of these core foundations and ecclesiology. Using the theoretical and practical areas as a beginning, expanding the theoretical disciplines of Biblical, Historical, and Systematic and the practical disciplines of Christian Ethics, Christian Education, and Church Administration support the problem statement as well as the hypothesis. The data and information connected to the preparation and process serve as a skeleton for my project. God is a Person with a plan. From Genesis through Revelation, we see the working out of God's plan to bring all men to himself. In Psalm 139 we see that he also has a plan for each individual life. [33] The project is called "A Ministry Model for Shaping Future Leaders"—a clear strategy for making mature disciples. happen. These strategies will be implemented to create successful succession planning. Again, the ministry model begins with models. People who model this as the biblical and theological data affirm the necessity of leadership. Leadership begins with one person—the leader. A thousand people may be led or a dozen management skills exercised, but ultimately the leadership equation may be reduced to a lone person, one individual whom people follow.[34] If one truly unpacks the biblical, historical, and theological foundations of this document, it should be clear by now that

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[33] Alice Fryling, *Disciplemakers' Handbook: Helping People Grow in Christ* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1989), 88.

[34] Harold Lawrence Myra, ed., *Leaders: Learning Leadership from Some of Christianity's Best*, vol. 12 (Carol Stream, IL: Word Books, 1987), 25.

leaders matter. This quote by J. Richard Chase says it all. If a leader demonstrates competency, genuine concern for others, and admirable character, people will say, "I like what that person is doing. I'm going to follow him."[35]

[35] Myra, *Leaders*, 23.

CHAPTER FIVE

INTERDISCIPLINARY FOUNDATIONS

It is no secret that a well-designed succession plan is the major reason for long-term success and sustainability within an organization or business. It ensures a healthy and strong pipeline of potential leadership talent and solidifies a smooth leadership transition. The succession plan allows the organization to proactively address leadership changes due to retirements, resignations, or any other expected events. Because of the flexibility, it ensures that the organization can navigate through changes and challenges effectively and continue to thrive. Detailed planning permits the business to identify and prepare potential leaders aligned with the organization's values, vision, and goals. These future leaders are well-equipped to make strategic decisions that benefit the entire organization in the long run. Employees within the organization can also visualize opportunities for growth and development, which serve as motivational tools for retention and loyalty. When this occurs, employees are more likely to stay within the organization because of mutual benefit and investment in their development. A healthy succession plan allows the business or organization to train and prepare potential leaders. Therefore, potential leaders will receive the necessary skills and experience to lead the organization successfully in the future. I maintain that proper planning ensures a smooth leadership transition, allowing the company to maintain its current standings, successes, and practices while avoiding distractions and disruptions within the daily operation. Lastly, clear structure and protocols

of this type of plan allow the organization to create a road map for leadership transitions while at the same time identifying potential candidates so that they can move seamlessly into leadership roles as needed.

This paper's focus areas are education, leadership development, and management. I will explore Jack Welch's leadership training, development, and deployment model, which he created and used as General Electric's chief executive officer. His model, outlined in his book *Winning*, is considered a leadership legend in corporate America. I will focus on Welch's model and assess how other companies used it while evaluating its effectiveness. Many CEOs at some of America's largest corporations began their leadership journeys with Jack Welch at General Electric.

To further support this discussion, author John Maxwell joined the conversation. In addition to the many resources written on leadership, he established the John Maxwell Company, a leadership consulting and coaching firm that provides education, leadership development programs, and workshops to equip leaders no matter their field. Through his company, he has worked with numerous Fortune 500 companies and businesses, including nonprofits and governmental agencies, to help develop their leadership capabilities. There is an increasing need for intentional educational forums to ensure that future generations are prepared to lead. Failure is imminent without the proper training, tools, and wisdom the previous and current leadership must impart. The leadership development context is developed out of the necessity for leaders to be educated and equipped for every generation if the organization survives. Exhausting all resources is necessary to reform and reenergize leaders for generational sustainability. Lastly, the leadership management context provides

a deeper dive into the formation and structure of the corporate business succession model that will undergird this project.

The expertise of Jack Welch, the legendary CEO of General Electric, downloads critical principles that apply to running a successful corporation. In his 20-year tenure from 1981 to 2001, he increased GE's evaluation by 4.000%. And when he left the company, he received a severance package of 417 million. To this date, that's the biggest payment anyone has ever received. The development of being a great "people leader" and how to establish a corporate culture that encourages innovation and team spirit. He begins this by stating that a groups mission and values must be concrete and measurable. It must embody and enforce the values in order to accomplish one's mission. He also shares that every organization has top, bottom and average performers. It is critical to know who stands where and treat them accordingly. Lastly, fostering a culture where the people feel free to contribute their ideas and speak their minds.

Maxwell states, "I believe the bottom line in leadership isn't how far we advance ourselves but how far we advance others. That is achieved by serving others and adding value to their lives."[1] There's a reason it's ranked as one of the best leadership books ever. Entrepreneurs, executives, and managers find Maxwell's helpful advice because it's practical and easy to follow. Furthermore, "*The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership"* helps high performers figure out what they've done right and play into their strengths. Additionally, the data is beneficial because it offers plenty of ideas on fine-tuning weaker leadership qualities. Through the lens of these core foundations and the educational,

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[1] Maxwell, *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership,* 71.

leadership development, and management protocols, the cornerstones and foundations of the project will be informed.

I chose leadership development, management, and education areas because they support and undergird each of the following: the contextual problem, the biblical, theological, and historical foundations. Regarding the project's problem paper will show overwhelming evidence that leadership development and management is needed. Also, the senior pastor and leaders must intentionally mold future leaders by providing succession planning. Current leaders must excavate the problem before laying new solutions on an old foundation.

The biblical foundation intersects with leadership and development from the intentionality of leadership development when Moses provides Joshua with significant one-on-one training and development. The mantle passing from Moses that Joshua is inclusive of but not limited to field assignments. Joshua had to complete the assignments to demonstrate competency and character. Leadership development and management aligns with the theological foundation's ecclesiological focus, the study of the church. Additionally, the theological foundation focuses on several theological sub-perspectives which include the nature of the church, ordination, and discipleship. It is necessary to compare how multiple theologies address these sub-perspectives as well as seeing what information and methodologies they suggest that the church utilize when selecting and training future leaders.

Lastly, this paper highlights the strong connection between these leadership and developmental practices by bringing light to the historical foundation. It explored the birth of the Black church and historically Black colleges and universities during the Reformation

Era. The historical foundation also examined their leadership models and their impact in the church and community. This is inclusive of but not limited to the development of church administration, Christian ethics, and continuous Christian education.

Project Problem

The problem at Southern Missionary Baptist Church is that there is no succession plan for ministry leadership. The first step that the senior pastor and current ministry leaders need is to discern and identify what type of leaders the church will need to replace the existing, older ministry leadership. Before one can implement any succession plan, it is critical to know what leaders are replacing and when such leadership replacement will occur. Then, there will also be a need to assess whether there are any leadership needs that the church currently has but are unfulfilled or unmet. A part of the project will also need to determine the leadership training or recruiting the church will need to conduct to make such a succession plan effective. Determining these issues and concerns will be the focus of the project's main focus.

After the project is complete, one can then move to the next stage of realizing this goal: creating a leadership training, development, and deployment institute for the church. The third stage would then involve training your existing leaders how to help you operate such leadership training, development, and deployment institute. Once these leaders are trained to operate this institute, you and they can begin the process of recruiting and training new leadership candidates. Once you have trained these leadership candidates, the next step is to start utilizing these new leaders in leadership positions in the church. This progression is essential to fulfill the overarching goal. With this part in view, the hypothesis

would state, "If the senior pastor and existing leadership participate in a seminar about leadership succession, then they will be equipped to identify the future leadership needs of the ministry context."

In Jack Welch's book, *Winning*, he identifies some foundational components that further the educational need for a strong skeletal structure. Welch states, "Before you are a leader, success is all about growing yourself. When you become a leader, success is all about growing others."[2] The accountability of leaders must not be how long one can hold on to the reins but rather knowing it is necessary to give the reins to the people that current leaders should be grooming to further the organizations to be healthy, strong and vibrant legacies. Welch maintained that no matter what was happening in or around the company, leaders did some things to ensure success. It begins with eight principles that ultimately became rules for how he managed the company. He contends,

> "The first rule was leaders relentlessly upgrade their team, using every encounter as an opportunity to evaluate, coach, and build self-confidence. Two, leaders make sure people not only see the vision, but they also live and breathe it. Three, leaders get into everyone's skin, exuding positive energy and optimism. Four, leaders establish trust with candor, transparency, and credit. Five, leaders have the courage to make unpopular decisions and gut calls. Six, leaders have the courage to make unpopular decisions and gut calls. Seven, leaders probe and push with a curiosity that borders on skepticism, making sure their questions are answered with action. Leaders inspire risk taking and learning by setting the example. Eight, leaders celebrate."[3]

These principles or rules must be prioritized and executed with a healthy balance. "You have to evaluate—making sure the right people are in the right jobs, supporting and advancing those who are, and moving out those who are not. You have to coach —

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[2] Jack Welch and Paul Hecht, *Winning* (New York, NY: HarperCollins, 2005), 135.

[3] Welch, *Winning*, 137-138.

guiding, critiquing, and helping people to improve their performance in every way. And finally, you have to build self-confidence — pouring out encouragement, caring, and recognition. Self-confidence energizes, and it gives your people the courage to stretch, take risks, and achieve beyond their dreams. It is the fuel of winning teams."[4]

Maxwell echoes this sentiment in his writings on leadership by stating, "the leader is the lid."[5] The Law of Lid posits a leader's ability determines a person's level of effectiveness. This law ultimately says that a group or organization can only go as high as their leader's potential. For example, on a scale of one to ten, if the leader is an eight and the group is a five, the group can reach or improve to the leader's level of eight. However, if the leader is a six and the group is an eight, they will fall or decline to their leader's level. Maxwell strongly contends that leaders always do one of three things in their leadership model. Leaders make it happen, allow it to happen, or prevent it from happening. They make it happen with the authority attached to their title. With a pen stroke or by speaking a word, it becomes a coin toss, for the good or the bad. The people under their charge then have an opportunity to develop a working relationship established on reciprocated respect and trust.

When this happens, the leader can use this to make things happen through their influence. This is high-level leadership. Allowing it to happen suggests that the leader can permit excellent or bad things to occur intentionally by empowering others. This low-level leadership management style causes disconnection and disengagement. This ultimately

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[4] Welch, *Winning*, 142-144.

[5] Maxwell, *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership*, 55.

leads to distrust and finger-pointing and breaks the cohesive bonds. The leader can prevent it from happening. Lastly, the leader's competency and character determine whether something is prevented by avoiding it. The weaker they are, the more it prevents good things from occurring. The stronger they are, it prevents the bad things from happening. Again, competency and character are essential components to the success of an organization's strength and survival.

Finally, in the section committed to leadership education and development, Jim Collins, in his book *Good to Great*, identifies that every good-to-great company has Level 5 leadership during the pivotal transition years.[6] He defines Level 5 leadership as a five-level hierarchy of executive capabilities, with Level 5 at the top. Level 5 leaders embody a paradoxical mix of personal humility and professional will. They are ambitious, to be sure, but ambitious first and foremost for the company, not themselves. He reveals several factors in connection to Level 5 leaders. Level 5 leaders set up their successors for even greater success in the next generation, whereas egocentric Level 4 leaders often set up their successors for failure.[7] "Level 5 leaders display a compelling modesty. They are self-effacing and understated. In contrast, two-thirds of the comparison companies had leaders with gargantuan personal egos that contributed to the demise or continued mediocrity of the company. Level 5 leaders display workmanlike diligence — more plow horse than show horse. Level 5 leaders are fanatically driven and infected with an incurable need to produce sustained results. They are resolved to do whatever it takes to make the company

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[6] James C. Collins, *Good to Great: Why Some Companies Make the Leap ... and Others Don't*, 1st ed. (New York, NY: Harper Business, 2001), 136-137.

[7] Collins, *Good to Great,*137-139.

great, no matter how big or hard the decisions."[8] These mentalities must be at the core of every leader, and they are dutybound to pass down to everyone and anyone for the organization or group to successfully pass down the type of mission and values that become an exemplary model for future generations. It all starts with leadership.

Body: The Biblical Foundation

The biblical foundation intersects with leadership and development, from the intentionality of leadership development when Moses passes the mantle to Joshua, where significant one-on-one training and development occurs. This includes but is not limited to field assignments Moses gave Joshua to complete to demonstrate competency and character. Welch paves the way for the intersection by establishing a process and priority to ensure you have the right candidates with integrity, intelligence, and maturity.[9] Moses possessed the qualities of a great leader. Moses could have allowed his missing the Promised Land to give up on the nation of Israel, but he didn't. Too many leaders stop working when they fail or fall as they see their time ending. Moses had enough fortitude to select an individual with integrity, intelligence, and maturity. That man was Joshua. Welch calls this an acid test.[10] The first test is the integrity test. All involved must use the exact definition of integrity. For this purpose, people who have integrity tell the truth and keep

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[8] Collins, *Good to Great, 137.*

[9] Welch, *Winning,*181.

[10] Welch, *Winning,* 181.

their word. They must be candid, honest, and reputable. They take responsibility for past actions, admit mistakes, and fix them. They play by the rules to win the right way.[11]

The Bible narrative shares that Aaron didn't have the necessary integrity, and he disqualified himself, costing him dearly. Numbers 20:22-28 states,

> They set out from Kadesh, and the Israelites, the whole congregation, came to Mount Hor. Then the LORD said to Moses and Aaron at Mount Hor, on the border of the land of Edom, "Let Aaron be gathered to his people. For he shall not enter the land that I have given to the Israelites, because you rebelled against my command at the waters of Meribah. Take Aaron and his son Eleazar, and bring them up Mount Hor; strip Aaron of his vestments, and put them on his son Eleazar. But Aaron shall be gathered to his people, and shall die there." [27] Moses did as the LORD had commanded; they went up Mount Hor in the sight of the whole congregation. Moses stripped Aaron of his vestments, and put them on his son Eleazar; and Aaron died there on the top of the mountain. Moses and Eleazar came down from the mountain. When all the congregation saw that Aaron had died, all the house of Israel mourned for Aaron for thirty days.

Because of Joshua's character, God validates Moses' successor.[12] The second test is for intelligence.[13] It means the candidate has a strong dose of intellectual curiosity, with a breadth of knowledge to work with or lead other smart people through daily challenges. In general, intelligence begins with being smart enough to be obedient. Welch's point is that a candidate's education is only a piece of the picture, especially regarding intelligence. Both God and Moses prepared Joshua. This on-the-job training lasted 40 years, allowing Joshua to lead them to the Promised Land, take it, and conquer it as God had commanded. All his experiences in Egypt and the wilderness groomed him for the assignment.

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[11] Welch, *Winning,* 181.

[12] Numbers 27:18.

[13] Welch, *Winning*, 183.

Whether it was leading Israel in battle, accompanying Moses to Mt. Sinai, or meeting in the tent.

The third ticket to his credit is maturity.[14] One can be mature and immature at any age, too. Nevertheless, certain traits seem to indicate a person has grown up: the individual can withstand the heat, handle stress and setbacks, and, alternatively, enjoy success with equal parts of joy and humility when those great moments ascend. Mature people respect the emotions of others. They feel confident but are not arrogant. If churches are going to reach future generations, the senior members must demonstrate great maturity. With great patience and passion, senior leaders realize there is a shift. Under the guidance of the current leadership, future leaders are prepared for their assignments. Maturity is also the ability to cope with failure.

Collins suggests a strong sense of discipline among those who demonstrate these traits. "Leaders are to build a culture around the idea of freedom and responsibility within a framework. Fill that culture with self-disciplined people who are willing to go to extreme lengths to fulfill their responsibilities."[15] The good-to-great companies built a consistent system with clear constraints, but they also gave people freedom and responsibility within the framework of that system. They hired self-disciplined people who didn't need to be managed and then managed the system, not the people."[16] These practices, protocols, and procedures speak to creating a culture of disciplined people. In short, without discipline, there can be no learning. Without discipline and learning, there can be no optimistic

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[14] Welch, *Winning,* 184.

[15] Collins, *Good to Great,* 418.

[16] Collins, *Good to Great,* 418.

outlook on the future. It will only produce dark despair and dismal days. The biblical foundational elements are naturally seen in the fact that Moses's training and development proved to be the necessary catalyst that produced the great future leader that Joshua would become.

The Theological Foundation

The theological foundation intersects with leadership development and management through ecclesiology, the study of the church. Ecclesiology includes the nature of the Church, ordination, and discipleship. This paper's section intersects with Welch's leadership development and management model.

The first intersection comes by way of the establishment and deployment of a strong mission. Without the precise purpose and focus on what a group or organization is supposed to do, there cannot be a commitment to do the work. In Welch's experience as General Electric's CEO, he suggests an effective mission statement answers one question: How do we intend to win in this business?[17] The concept of how one intends to win doesn't speak to how the group did in its heyday. It requires the group to learn from the past, act in the present so that the future success will be secured. Welch's belief is that it requires companies to make choices about people, investments, and other resources, and it prevents them from falling into the common mission trap of asserting they will be always all things to all people.[18] This truth supports a firm foundation in which it compels companies, organizations, and groups to outline its strengths and its weaknesses in order to assess

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[17]Welch, *Winning,* 37.

[18] Welch, *Winning,* 37.

where they can gainfully perform in competitive surroundings. This is essentially what the church structure has been built on and defined by. Just as the businesses of the corporate world have established and relied on a healthy organizational structure, so too much the church as a living organism hold to the defining statement of what God intends for the church to be and ensures that every generation is aware and diligent to execute it for the years to come. The final thought concerning mission is that for leadership, it must be the top priority and responsibility. A mission cannot, and must not, be delegated to anyone except the people ultimately responsible.[19]

The second intersection comes by way of the establishment and deployment of solid core values. In short, values are one's principles or standards of behavior, one's judgment of what is important in life. In a world competing for the attention and adoration of the masses, what one professes must be modeled by their behavior. They must be so well designed that it leads almost nothing to the imagination. The people who are a part of the organization must use it wisely because they become the "how" of the mission, the means to the end which is winning. Everyone within the organization should have something to say about the values and become the ambassadors of that group's cause. The more the group has to say on the values, the better the buy-in is from within the group itself. That's exactly why those ordained in church and its true disciples help affirm the purpose of its mission. Jesus perfectly explains the mission of the church when he says, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always,

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[19] Welch, *Winning,* 44.

to the end of the age."[20] The mission is crystal clear and so are the values. Jesus says that disciples are the conduit to fulfill the mission if they adopt the behavior he requires in our discipleship and leadership. Jesus also says that to fulfill the mission, disciples must "love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets."[21] When disciples model the proper behavior, their values verify their mission to the masses.

To maturely handle and demonstrate core values, it must also intersect with the church's emotional health. All the values can be stated, but they must be displayed. In the *Emotionally Healthy Church*, seven principles help disciples mentor each other, whether disciples are emotional infants, children, adolescents, or adults.[22] The writers share seven principles to help center a strong leadership management model within the church. Looking beneath the church's surface is paramount to looking into the church's heart. Too many churches tend to look everywhere but within. Next is the principle of breaking the power of the past. There is a tendency to allow external forces and situations to hinder the positivity of the future. Another principle is to live and lead out of brokenness and vulnerability. Healthy churches understand that leadership in God's kingdom is built on the principles of servitude and mutual respect. Healthy churches recognize that all God-

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[20] Matthew 28:18-20.

[21] Matthew 22:37-40

[22] Peter Scazzero, Warren Bird, and Leighton Ford, *The Emotionally Healthy Church, Expanded Edition: A Strategy for Discipleship That Actually Changes Lives* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2013), 218.

given gifts have expectations and limitations, so no one can lord them over anyone else. They joyfully receive the one, two, seven, or ten talents God has graciously distributed. As a result, they are not frenzied and covetous, trying to live a life God has given them. They embrace what they have rather than try to imitate another church. They embrace grieving and loss to become sensitive to others in ways like God. They intentionally embrace the Christocentric model of Jesus Christ. They focus on loving well, recognizing that the indispensable mark of spiritual maturity is not about recognition, numbers, spiritual gifts, or biblical knowledge. The essence of a genuine spiritual life is to love — God, ourselves, and other people. They commit themselves to follow the three dynamics of incarnation found in the life of Jesus to love other people: entering another's world, holding on to yourself, and hanging between two worlds.[23] These leadership development and management principles affirm the theological foundations as seen in corporate business models.

The Historical Foundation

Lastly, this paper highlights the strong connection between the leadership and developmental practices of the Black church and HBCUs during the Reformation era. It examines their leadership models and their impact on the church and community. This section also discusses the motivations HBCUs' founders. The schools were founded during the Reconstruction Era and were created to train newly freed enslaved Africans how to lead their people. Each HBCU founder had different motivations for developing Black men and women as leaders. However, each founder created a unique leadership training,

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[23] Scazzero, *The Emotionally Healthy Church,* 628.

development, and deployment process. These newly created HBCUs include Howard University, Hampton University, Morehouse College, Spelman College, and Fisk University. Between 1861 and 1900, more than ninety institutions of higher learning were established. Following the end of the Civil War and the abolition of slavery, HBCUs were founded throughout the South with support from the Freedmen's Bureau, a federal organization that operated during Reconstruction to help former slaves adjust to freedom. Such institutions as Atlanta University (1865; now Clark Atlanta University), Howard University, and Morehouse College (1867; originally the Augusta Institute) provided a liberal arts education and trained students for careers as teachers or ministers and missionaries, while others focused on preparing students for industrial or agricultural occupations. Some institutions, such as Morehouse, were all-male schools. Others, such as Spelman College (1924; originally founded in 1881 as Atlanta Baptist Female Seminary), were all-female. Most, however, were coeducational.

The growth of HBCUs spurred controversy among prominent African Americans in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Some critics noted that many HBCUs, particularly those existing in the years immediately following the Civil War, were founded by whites, many of whom had negative preconceptions of the social, cultural, and intellectual capabilities of Black people. As Black students were generally barred, particularly in the South, from established white institutions, critics questioned whether separate schools in fact hindered efforts toward social and economic equality with whites. The emergence of these institutions was based upon the vision of great men and women of color, and the birth of these institutions was solidified by its pioneers. It led to statements like "The purposes of the Corporation are the education of young men and

women irrespective of color and to that end the Trustees shall have the right to prescribe a course of study and shall have the power to confer all such degrees and honors as are conferred by universities in the United States," the Fisk trustees declared. A strong declaration to serve it was, one that challenged followers there and across the region to at least match, if not exceed. A challenging future was ahead indeed, with no clear road map to get there and only scattered help along the way.[24] Like fashion, many leadership development and management principles paralleled business models.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this interdisciplinary theme is essential to my project as it undergirds succession planning for future generations by establishing a firm foundation that emerges from the educational leadership development and management provided. This interdisciplinary theme affirms my chosen biblical foundation**.** The Book of Acts and other passages help track and reinforce my project. We mean, then, by Ecclesiology, Ecclesiology is the study of the church. The word Ecclesiology comes from two Greek words meaning "assembly" and "word"—combining to mean "the study of the church." The church is the assembly of believers who belong to God. Ecclesiology is crucial to understanding God's purpose for believers in the world today. Historically, this theme will explore the beginnings of the church and the development of its leadership throughout the life of the church. In addition to the church fathers, examining the motivations of the

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[24] Reginald Stuart, "HBCU's Mission Rooted in Reconstruction," February 18, 2016, https://www.diverseeducation.com/demographics/african-american/article/15097997/hbcus-mission-rooted-in-reconstruction#:~:text=%E2%80%9CThe%20purposes%20of%20the%20Corporation,United%20States%2C%E2%80%9D%20the%20Fisk%20trustees.

founders of HBCUs. Every HBCU that was founded during the Reconstruction Era was created with the purpose of training newly freed African slaves how to be leaders to our race. Each HBCU founder had different, individual motivations for developing these Black men and women into leaders. But each founder created a unique process of leadership training, development, and deployment. Howard University, Hampton University, Morehouse College, Spelman College, and Fisk University are some. Comparing and contrasting their founders' motivations and leadership training, development, and deployment models provide information and methodologies that inform the Final Project. When comparing these founders' motivations, consider what qualities, characteristics, prerequisites, and requirements, a model of success was proven in selecting future leaders. This is inclusive to but not limited to the development of church administration, Christian ethics and the ongoing Christian Education. Theologically, the context extracts from the area in practical theology with deep dives into the development of Christian ethics, the foundations of Church Administration and the skeletal structure of the training through Christian Education. This gives important information to the framework of my project. Lastly, from an interdisciplinary foundation, we see example of leadership development, management, and deployment from corporate business models and various experts in this area that affirm intersection avenues and support the project.

How This Text Informs My Project

The cornerstones and foundations of my project will be informed through the lens of these core foundation writings and the Ecclesiology. Using the theoretical and practical areas as a beginning, expanding the theoretical disciplines of Biblical, Historical, and

Systematic and the practical disciplines of Christian Ethics, Christian Education, and Church Administration support the problem statement as well as the hypothesis. The data and information that connects to preparation and process serve as a skeleton for my project.

The project is themed as “A Ministry Model for Shaping Future Leaders”. clear strategy for making mature disciples. First, you will determine what a mature disciple would look like in your church context. This will explain why you do what you do— your church’s primary ministries. Second, you will evaluate and work with your current primary ministries that are in place to make disciples. Third, you will develop a way to measure your progress in making disciples. Fourth, you will address how to staff your church to make disciples. Finally, you will discover how to develop a church budget to make this happen. These strategies will be implemented in order to create a successful made for succession planning.

CHAPTER SIX

PROJECT ANALYSIS

Introduction

Reflecting on my ministerial journey gave me clarity and confirmed the work I needed to do. Once settled, I immediately embraced the task of creating and investigating the need for a leadership succession plan within my church and assisting other churches establish longevity and legacy for future generations. Leadership is indeed the cornerstone of any thriving organization, and the church is no exception. Within the framework of spiritual communities, effective leadership is not only vital for organizational health but is also a theological imperative rooted in Scripture. The Southern Missionary Baptist Church of Cincinnati, Ohio, finds itself at a critical juncture: a beloved but aging leadership structure, shifting congregational demographics, and the pressing need to equip a new generation for spiritual and organizational continuity. As such, this project titled "A Ministry Model for Shaping Future Leaders" emerges not merely as a scholarly endeavor but as a deeply pastoral and strategic response to an existential challenge facing the church today.

The heart of this project centers on developing and implementing a leadership succession model explicitly tailored for the Southern Missionary Baptist Church. The model is built around a six-week series of interactive seminars, assessments, and fieldwork designed to educate and empower the current leadership, including the senior pastor and

twenty to thirty other ministry leaders, to intentionally identify, train, and deploy emerging leaders within the congregation. In an era where leadership voids can cause significant instability in churches, the lack of a succession plan is not only a leadership oversight but a spiritual vulnerability. At its core, this project seeks to address the problem of leadership discontinuity. Too often, churches lose momentum, vision, and even membership when key leaders depart without having prepared someone to carry on the mission. In the case of the Southern Missionary Baptist Church, this issue is amplified by the aging profile of many of its leaders. Several have transitioned away through retirement, relocation, or death, often without identifying successors or mentoring the next generation. The impact of this gap is felt in various ministries across the church, from pulpit leadership to youth programs and administrative functions. The church is left not only with empty seats of power but also with a lack of clarity on how to fill them.

The hypothesis guiding this project is both theological and practical as I contend "If the senior pastor and existing leadership participate in a series of seminars about leadership succession, then they will be equipped to identify the future leadership needs of the ministry context." This model draws inspiration from biblical leadership transitions, notably found in the book of Numbers 27:12-23, where Moses, under God's instruction, lays hands on Joshua to continue the mission. This intentional, prayerful, and public transition serves as a prototype for how the church might embrace succession as a spiritual act of stewardship rather than an administrative obligation.

To develop a context-specific and actionable succession plan, the project begins with establishing a foundation of understanding among current leaders. This involves initial assessments through pre-project surveys, which gauge awareness of leadership gaps

and the church's readiness for transition. The first seminar introduces the concept of succession planning, not merely as leadership replacement, but as leadership "reproduction." Participants are challenged to view leadership development as relational and incarnational—something that happens shoulder-to-shoulder, life-on-life, through intentional mentoring and spiritual formation. Subsequent sessions progressively build upon this foundation. The second seminar is dedicated to Identifying Key Positions, those roles within the church that, if left unfilled, would critically hinder ministry effectiveness. This includes both visible leadership roles (such as pastors, deacons, and ministry directors) and behind-the-scenes functions (such as administrative coordinators, financial stewards, and volunteer organizers). Through facilitated discussion and analysis of the pre-surveys, participants begin to understand which positions are "at risk" and which ones must be prioritized in succession planning.

The third session focuses on "Assessing Potential Talent." Leaders are introduced to tools and frameworks for evaluating emerging leaders within the congregation. The church is encouraged to look beyond surface-level performance to discern potential—those intangible qualities that indicate a person may be a visionary leader, even if they are currently untrained or underutilized. Attributes such as spiritual maturity, emotional intelligence, communication ability, and servant-heartedness are emphasized. If internal candidates are not readily available, strategies for external recruitment are discussed. The fourth session, "Accelerating Successor Development," moves from identification to activation. Leaders are trained in coaching and mentoring techniques that can rapidly develop the competencies of potential successors. The seminar introduces the idea of creating a leadership pipeline that prepares successors not just for roles, but for missional

effectiveness. This phase also includes one-on-one interviews and journaling assignments, further personalizing the leadership development process and building accountability structures.

The fifth session is a particularly innovative aspect of the project, which involves "Ministry Fieldwork". Here, current leaders are paired with cross-generational mentees in a practical, ministry-based environment. These partnerships serve multiple purposes: documenting ministry evolution, exposing future leaders to real-time ministry dynamics, and building bridges between generations. This experiential learning format reinforces the seminar content and ensures that succession planning is not confined to theoretical discussion but grounded in actual church life.

The final seminar, "Leadership Reproduction and SWOT Analysis," is both reflective and strategic. It invites all participants to evaluate the succession plan developed throughout the project. Using the SWOT framework, Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats, leaders critically examine the model's sustainability and identify areas that require further attention. This concluding session also includes post-project surveys, allowing for data collection and measuring project effectiveness.

The seminar was designed to bring awareness of the need for such a strategic plan. These six weeks are merely the first phase of a long-term vision for sustainable leadership development within the church. Upon acceptance from these leaders, the next step will be establishing a leadership training, development, and deployment institute within the church. These sessions will be the formal platform for ongoing leadership formation, equipping existing leaders to become new candidates' instructors, mentors, and assessors. The goal is

to build a perpetual system where leadership development is not an occasional intervention but a constant rhythm of church life.

The metaphor, building a house, is used throughout the project because it illustrates the layered and sequential nature of the endeavor. Just as a house must begin with excavation and site preparation before laying the foundation, so must the church carefully discern its leadership needs before implementing any succession plan. Clearing the "rocks" and "underbrush" may involve confronting difficult truths about past leadership failures or gaps. Leveling the ground requires honest assessments and restructuring. Laying initial plumbing and electrical lines represents the early investments in systems and relationships that make future leadership possible.

In summary, "A Ministry Model for Shaping Future Leaders" is more than a strategic intervention. It is a theological and pastoral commitment to ensuring the continuity of God's work in the Southern Missionary Baptist Church. It addresses a pressing need with a comprehensive, spiritually grounded, and practically executable plan. It empowers current leaders to become mentors, architects, and visionaries of a future church led by those they have trained, trusted, and released.

By the conclusion of this project, the Southern Missionary Baptist Church will not only have a documented and tested succession plan but also have begun to create a culture in which leadership development is an ongoing, shared responsibility. This model may well serve as a blueprint for other churches facing similar challenges, reminding us that true leadership is not about holding on but about passing on.

METHODOLOGY

Pre- and Post-Project Surveys

The data collected through pre- and post-project surveys highlights notable shifts in participants' understanding and attitudes toward leadership succession planning within a church context. The analysis focuses on self-reported ratings and responses to key leadership development questions both before and after a series of leadership sessions. Before the leadership sessions, participants demonstrated a moderate understanding of leadership succession planning, with an average rating of 3.51 out of 5. This suggests that while some individuals had a grasp of the concept, there was significant room for improvement. After the sessions, the average understanding increased substantially to 4.63, indicating a strong positive shift in awareness and comprehension of succession planning principles. Similarly, the perceived importance of having a succession plan within the church was already high before the sessions, with a pre-project average of 4.86. This value rose slightly to 4.96 in the post-project data, affirming that participants not only continued to view succession planning as critical but that the sessions may have reinforced and solidified this belief.

The pre-project data revealed that 74% of respondents had been mentored or trained by a previous leader in the church. This indicates a relatively strong tradition of leadership handoff and support, although this was not always formalized through structured succession plans. However, when asked whether they were currently training or mentoring someone else, only 22% responded affirmatively. This gap suggests a lack of active

leadership development at the time, with fewer individuals taking on the responsibility of preparing future leaders. Post-project responses show some improvement in participants' willingness to take on mentorship roles. While only 36% indicated they would train or mentor a future leader—a modest increase—it shows progress in cultivating a culture of proactive leadership development. Notably, when asked whether the church should implement a leadership succession plan, 88% of participants answered "yes," indicating a recognition of the need for formal processes despite some lingering hesitation.

Interview Questions

The data presented in Interview Questions offers a comprehensive look into long-standing church leaders' experiences, motivations, and concerns. It provides valuable insight into the need for a ministry model that shapes future leadership. The interviews encompass leadership tenure, personal leadership journeys, leadership rewards and challenges, and opinions on the necessity of a succession plan.

Questions 1 & 2: Leadership Experience and Journey

The group of interviewees includes individuals who have served in church leadership roles ranging from one year to over forty years, reflecting a wide generational span and depth of involvement. Leadership roles include serving as deacons, trustees, Sunday school teachers, ministry managers, choir directors, ushers, and committee members. Many respondents have held multiple roles across different ministries over the years, suggesting a deeply embedded culture of service and dedication. This breadth of experience underlines both the value and the burden of sustained leadership. The leadership

journeys shared emphasize organic progression: individuals often began in smaller support roles before taking on more significant leadership responsibilities. This path frequently involved teaching, serving on committees, or managing operational areas like music and hospitality and gradually evolving into roles with greater spiritual and organizational oversight.

Question #3: Rewards of Leadership

Leaders expressed a deep appreciation for their roles' relational and spiritual dimensions. Commonly cited rewards include building connections with fellow members, watching others grow in faith, being part of a collaborative and supportive team, and the opportunity to serve God and the church community meaningfully. Many mentioned the joy of mentoring, training, and equipping others—especially youth and new leaders—as particularly fulfilling aspects of their ministry work. Themes of fellowship, community-building, and spiritual growth emerged repeatedly, emphasizing that leadership is viewed not just as responsibility but as a divine calling and a means of personal and communal transformation.

Question #4: Leadership Challenges

While rewarding, leadership also presents numerous challenges. A major concern is managing interpersonal dynamics, including navigating conflict, dealing with difficult personalities, and ensuring unity within the team. Leaders noted the difficulty of balancing ministry with personal commitments, emphasizing the need for time management and prioritization. Resistance to change and generational tension surfaced as significant

obstacles, especially when trying to engage younger members or when older members feel entitled to leadership based on tenure rather than capability. Burnout, lack of accountability, and inconsistent participation were also cited as persistent struggles. Leaders repeatedly stressed the need to shift focus from personal agendas to collective mission, pointing out the importance of spiritual maturity, cooperation, and alignment with biblical principles.

Question #5: Succession Planning

The interviewees unanimously agreed on the necessity of a formal leadership succession plan. Many recognized the aging leadership demographic and the risk of ministries faltering without a prepared new generation. A well-structured succession model was seen as vital for preserving continuity, ensuring competent and godly leadership, and maintaining the church's mission and spiritual health. Participants emphasized that a succession plan fosters clarity, unity, and smooth transitions. It also offers a mentorship and leadership development platform, empowering younger members to rise into roles of influence. Some noted concerns about implementing this plan in their church context, but all viewed it as a crucial step toward sustainability and growth. The data reveals a dedicated and spiritually driven group of leaders who have sustained the church through decades of service. While they enjoy deep fellowship and purpose in their roles, they face significant operational and relational challenges. The overwhelming consensus for a leadership succession model underscores the urgency of preparing future leaders. This model must respect the church's legacy while fostering a culture of mentorship, accountability, and spiritual growth to ensure long-term vitality.

Implementation

The initial session and lesson focused on establishing a biblical model for leadership succession within ministry settings. The session opens with a foundational question: What is a biblical succession plan, and why is it necessary? The teaching introduces the concept of a succession plan as a deliberate and organized transfer of leadership modeled throughout Scripture. It involves mentoring, appointing, and anointing a successor to continue a ministry or a church's spiritual and organizational mission, ensuring long-term faithfulness to God's vision. The lesson I taught pointed to notable biblical examples of succession, such as Jesus commissioning His apostles to carry on His ministry, Elijah passing leadership to Elisha, Paul mentoring Timothy and Titus, Moses appointing 70 elders to assist with leadership, and Moses transitioning leadership to Joshua before Israel entered the Promised Land. The heart of the session is a study of Numbers 27:12–23, where God appoints Joshua to succeed Moses. The passage breaks down into four movements:

1. Problem/Situation (vv. 12–14): God tells Moses that he will not enter the Promised Land due to past disobedience. However, Israel still needs strong leadership for the journey ahead.

2. Prayer/Submission (vv. 15–17): In humility, Moses asks God to appoint a new leader for the people—someone who will shepherd them and lead them in battle.

3. Promotion/Successor (vv. 18–21): God responds by naming Joshua, a man filled with the Spirit, as the next leader. Moses is instructed to commission him and publicly share some of his authority.

4. Presented/Secured (vv. 22–23): Moses obeys God and publicly affirms Joshua's leadership before the priest and the entire community, securing a smooth leadership transition for the next generation.

This structured approach illustrates how God values intentional leadership transitions, spiritual preparation, and the public recognition of leadership authority. After the lesson, participants are prompted with discussion and reflection questions, such as: What is a biblical succession plan? Why is it necessary? What are three biblical examples of leadership succession? What are three reasons succession is necessary for the church? Does your church or ministry have a Leadership Succession Plan (LSP)?

The session emphasized that biblical succession is necessary for seven reasons: continuity of Vision, which ensures the church's mission and purpose carry on through new leadership; stability and Order, which prevent confusion or conflict during transitions; Spiritual Growth, which encourages leadership development; and accountability, which promotes transparency in leadership selection. Effective Leadership Development which allows leaders to mentor successors intentionally. Alignment with God's Will, which reflects stewardship and wise planning, and Relationship Building, which cultivates unity between generations of leaders. Session 1 ended with a focused journal time and closing prayer, reinforcing personal application and spiritual reflection on leadership responsibility and stewardship. Participants are also instructed on how to use their weekly folders and complete a pre-survey, indicating this is part of a larger course or leadership development series.

In Session 2 **(**Identifying key roles), I opened with prayer and a review of the previous session. This leadership development series explores the theme of establishing a solid ministry model by identifying and cultivating key leadership roles for future succession. The session opens with a prayer and a review of the concept of a biblical succession plan, emphasizing its intentional and spiritual nature as seen throughout

Scripture. Biblical succession involves a purposeful transition of leadership marked by mentorship, appointment, and the transfer of authority and responsibility. The introduction uses the imagery of a firm foundation and cornerstone to underscore the structural integrity and purpose of leadership within the church. Just as a physical building requires a strong foundation and a cornerstone to guide its structure, spiritual leadership must rest on biblical truths and Christ as the foundation. Scripture serves as the theological grounding for the lesson. Ephesians 2:19-22 describes the Church as a spiritual house built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ as the cornerstone. 1 Peter 2:4-8 extends the metaphor, portraying believers as "living stones" being formed into a spiritual temple, with Christ again as the cornerstone—rejected by some, but chosen and honored by God. From these passages, the session teaches that strong leadership, and succession must be grounded in Christ, built upon sound doctrine, and carried out by a united body of believers. To have a strong foundation in leadership, ministries must show a clear vision and goals to provide a roadmap for growth. Strong values and principles core beliefs that inform decisions. Lastly, Adaptive leadership, which is the ability to lead with empathy, flexibility, and innovation.

The lesson also identified key biblical roles within a healthy ministry structure, including Elders/Overseers/Pastors, Spiritual shepherds (Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:2), Deacons as Servant leaders (1 Timothy 3:8–13), Teachers/Preachers as Communicators of God's Word (Ephesians 4:11), Evangelists as Spreaders of the gospel (2 Timothy 4:5), Worship Leaders to Lead in praise and worship (1 Chronicles 25:1–7), Prophets who Speak forth God's truth (1 Corinthians 12:28) and Administrators/Helpers to Provide structure and support (1 Corinthians 12:28). During the discussion segment, participants are encouraged

to reflect on identifying these roles, clearly defining responsibilities, and developing potential candidates for future success. The post-lesson questions reiterate the biblical and practical importance of succession planning. Participants are prompted to evaluate whether their own church or ministry has a Leadership Succession Plan (LSP) and what steps may be needed to establish one. Session two ends with a focused journaling exercise for personal reflection and a closing prayer, reinforcing the importance of spiritual intentionality in leadership development. Overall, the session provides a biblical framework and practical tools for shaping resilient, Christ-centered future leaders in the church.

In Session 3 (Assessing Potential Talent), I emphasized the essential traits of competency and character in assessing and developing potential ministry leaders. While competency refers to a person's skills, knowledge, and ability to execute tasks effectively, character involves moral integrity, humility, honesty, and how individuals treat others. Although both are important, character is deemed foundational, especially in spiritual leadership. A person may develop skills over time, but those abilities can be misused without integrity. The session used the example of Jesus to argue that character takes precedence over competency. When selecting his disciples, Jesus didn't choose those with impressive résumés or social influence. Instead, he looked for people with the right heart, willingness to follow, and capacity for growth. Jesus prioritized faith, humility, and teachability over talent or experience. For instance, Peter, despite his flaws, was chosen and transformed into a foundational leader in the early church. Jesus' model demonstrates that character guides how competency is used. Several biblical examples underscore Jesus's preference for character: He chose ordinary men—fishermen and a tax collector—based

on their potential and willingness, not their expertise. He valued servant leadership marked by humility and compassion (Mark 10:42-45). He rebuked religious leaders who were technically skilled but lacked integrity (Matthew 23:23-28). He invested in transformation, focusing on reshaping flawed individuals rather than rejecting them.

The lesson also outlined how Jesus assessed and developed talent: By Calling the unlikely, he recognized the potential in those overlooked by society. By Observing faith and willingness, he reinforced that immediate obedience was more important than background. By Testing their commitment, he ensured Followers were often challenged to leave their comfort zones. By delegating responsibilities early, his Disciples grew through experience. By teaching through real-life experiences and parables, he built both wisdom and character within them. By observing their reactions, Jesus noticed how his followers responded to adversity. By praying before making decisions, he demonstrated that his Leadership choices were made with divine discernment. By recognizing potential beyond weakness, He saw not who people were but who they could become.

The session then contrasted this with a list of Jesus's indictments against religious leaders of his time, providing a stark warning. These leaders often exhibited hypocrisy, love of power and prestige, legalism without love, corrupt motives, False teachings, blocking access to God, lack of compassion, opposition to God's messengers, self-righteousness, and spiritual blindness. These behaviors are negative examples, reminding today's leaders to focus on humility, truth, compassion, and spiritual integrity. Lastly, the final segment of the lesson provides a criteria list for assessing modern-day leadership potential: spiritual maturity, godly character (as outlined in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1), servant leadership, biblical knowledge and sound doctrine, teaching and leadership skills,

emotional and relational intelligence, faithfulness and commitment, accountability and teachability, evidence of divine calling, Prayer and discernment in leadership selection. Session three ends with discussion questions about identifying and nurturing talent, integrating succession planning, and fostering continual growth in ministry leaders. It concludes with a journal prompt and a closing prayer, encouraging self-reflection and application.

Session 4 of the leadership development series focused on the concept of accelerating successor development within ministry contexts. This session builds upon the foundation laid in Sessions 1–3, emphasizing the importance of a Christ-centered, purpose-driven, people-oriented, and outreach-focused ministry model. Drawing inspiration from Acts 2:42–47, the lesson highlights how the early church thrived through community, generosity, spiritual devotion, and shared leadership—a model both historically effective and relevant for today's leadership succession. The central aim of this session is to explore how to fast-track the development of high-potential individuals, so they are equipped and ready to step into critical leadership roles. The process, called successor development, is not just about filling roles but ensuring seamless leadership continuity through intentional investment in people. It acknowledges the growing need for a robust leadership pipeline and the urgency to equip emerging leaders before leadership gaps arise.

A range of strategic methodologies were presented to facilitate this accelerated development: Mentorship and coaching pair future leaders with seasoned mentors. Ministries can foster growth in decision-making, character development, and spiritual maturity. Mentors provide both encouragement and accountability. Job Rotations and Cross-Functional Exposure give individuals exposure to multiple areas of ministry, helping

to broaden their perspective, build versatility, and deepen their strategic understanding. Leadership Development Programs provide structured environments that allow emerging leaders to learn essential skills such as vision casting, delegation, conflict resolution, and organizational planning. Action Learning Projects (Fieldwork) assign real-life ministry challenges to potential leaders and promote innovative thinking, problem-solving, and practical application of their faith and knowledge. Stretch Assignments ensure that when future leaders are tasked with responsibilities beyond their current comfort zones, their adaptability and leadership capacity are tested and refined. Shadowing Senior Leaders cultivate observing current leaders in action helps successors grasp communication, discernment, and crisis management nuances. Personalized Development Plans tailor growth paths to ensure individual strengths, gaps, and goals are considered, promoting more focused development. Feedback and Performance Reviews provide constructive, ongoing evaluations that align with ministry goals and allow for timely course correction. Succession Simulation drills mimic real-life leadership scenarios to prepare successors for unexpected challenges and critical decision-making moments. External Learning Opportunities help encourage leaders to engage in broader leadership forums and training outside their home ministry and foster fresh insights and innovation. Creating a Leadership Pipeline cultivates a long-term strategy that ensures a constant flow of prepared leaders at all levels, enhancing organizational resilience and spiritual vitality. It also cultivates a culture of growth, learning, and servant leadership.

The discussion section of Session 4 invited participants to reflect deeply on how these strategies can be practically implemented within their ministry settings. Questions explore the specifics of training programs, the role of mentors and coaches, and how to

ensure smooth leadership transitions. The lesson stressed that leadership development is not incidental—it must be intentional, strategic, and spiritually grounded. When a church embraces this proactive approach, it not only secures its future but mirrors the biblical model of multiplying leaders who are deeply formed in character, equipped in skill, and driven by the mission of the gospel. Session 4 concluded with a focused journaling exercise and prayer, inviting leaders to seek God's wisdom as they invest in raising the next generation of servant leaders.

Session 5 emphasized the importance of ministry fieldwork as a crucial component in developing new and future ministry leaders. The overall structure of the session includes prayer, a review of the previous four sessions, a central discussion on the significance of fieldwork, interactive small group discussions, and reflective journaling. The session opened with prayer, setting a spiritual tone for the evening. This is followed by a review of Sessions 1–4, likely to reinforce the foundational principles already discussed and to maintain continuity and focus in the leadership development process.

Introduction: The Importance of Fieldwork

The session's core began with a key question: Why is fieldwork essential for developing new leaders? The answer provided frames fieldwork as indispensable due to its experiential learning benefits. Unlike theoretical instruction alone, fieldwork immerses future leaders in the ministry's daily realities and challenges. This hands-on involvement enhances their ability to make informed decisions, solve problems, and understand complex team dynamics. By actively engaging in real-life ministry scenarios, leaders build confidence, learn to adapt quickly and gain a deeper, more nuanced understanding of

leadership principles in action. The process shapes leaders not just in knowledge, but in character, discernment, and relational intelligence. Participants were then invited to reflect on their own ministry experiences through a series of diagnostic questions:

> 1. What is your current assessment of the ministry area you work in? This encourages leaders to evaluate strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges in their ministry environments.
>
> 2. Do you know the purpose of the ministry and leadership hierarchy? This question probes participants' understanding of the ministry's structure and mission, fostering alignment and clarity in leadership roles.
>
> 3. Do you see a visible plan or model for shaping future leadership within your ministry? This invites leaders to think strategically about leadership succession, intentional mentoring, and long-term vision for growth.

These questions served both as personal reflection tools and springboards for group conversation, helping participants identify gaps and opportunities for leadership development within their ministry contexts. The session's most interactive component was the small group discussion, which centers around a provocative and forward-thinking question: If you and your current leadership team were responsible for leaving a manual for your ministry and/or a last will to pass on to the next set of leaders, what ten things would make the list? Each group was tasked with generating a list of ten critical principles, practices, values, or instructions they would pass on to ensure continuity, effectiveness, and integrity in ministry. This exercise encouraged legacy thinking and cultivated a culture of intentional leadership reproduction. It promotes clarity on what truly matters in ministry and helps solidify a shared vision among leaders.

Session 5 Small Group Discussion Summary

In Session 5 of the fieldwork small group discussion, thirty current and future ministry leaders participated in a reflective and collaborative exercise focused on legacy and leadership succession. The prompt asked each small group to imagine they were responsible for leaving behind a leadership manual or a last will for the next generation of ministry leaders. Specifically, they were to identify ten key items they would include in that manual, offering detailed reasoning behind each choice. A major theme that emerged across all six small groups was the centrality of biblical foundations. Leaders agreed that any enduring manual must root itself in Scripture, anchoring the ministry's mission, values, and practices in God's Word. This would ensure that future leaders remain faithful to the original spiritual vision and calling of the ministry.

The second recurring theme was the importance of a clearly defined purpose and mission. Groups emphasized that ministry leaders must know what the ministry does and *why* it does it. A well-articulated purpose statement would help future leaders stay aligned with the ministry's goals, helping them make wise decisions and stay motivated over time. Closely tied to the mission was the need for succession planning. Leaders stressed the importance of identifying, mentoring, and equipping potential successors from within the organization. This includes developing character-based leadership, supporting individuals in their spiritual and professional growth, and ensuring continuity by preparing leaders before the need arises. Many groups included organizational structure and leadership roles in their lists, including detailed job descriptions, responsibilities, and expectations for each role within the ministry. This would provide clarity and consistency across leadership transitions. Some also mentioned including rosters of current and future

leaders to give the next team a reference point. A significant practical component was the inclusion of manuals, rules, procedures, and bylaws. These tools provide operational clarity and consistency in ministry practices. Several groups mentioned conflict resolution strategies and guidelines as essential parts of the manual, recognizing that interpersonal issues are inevitable and must be addressed biblically and constructively.

Another vital inclusion was training and orientation materials. These would help new leaders and volunteers understand how the ministry works and what is expected of them. This included assessments to evaluate learning and performance, sample forms, and evaluation templates for reviewing progress and accountability. A unique but widespread suggestion was including passion and dedication as vital to ministry success. Participants noted that while technical skills and structures are necessary, they are insufficient without heartfelt commitment to serving others and the ministry's mission. Budgeting, calendars, and events planning were also seen as vital, helping future leaders manage resources and timelines effectively. Several groups recommended including a treasury system, ideas for fundraising, and guidelines for handling ministry finances with integrity.

The idea of preserving the history of the ministry also surfaced. Leaders felt that knowing the ministry's origins, journey, and evolution of the ministry would help future leaders honor its legacy while adapting to new challenges. Lastly, a few groups mentioned including photos or visual documentation to inspire and remind future leaders of what the ministry has accomplished and what God has done through it. When the groups came together to share, they found significant overlap in their priorities, indicating strong unity among the leaders. Very few discrepancies emerged, demonstrating a shared understanding

of what matters most for sustaining a God-honoring ministry across generations. After the discussions, group reporting allows each team to present their lists to the larger group. This fosters peer learning, reveals common values, and highlights unique perspectives across ministries. The session concluded with a focused journal exercise, during which participants individually reflect on what they've learned, how it applies to their leadership journey, and what next steps they need to take. This journaling reinforces introspection and personal application. The session ends in prayer, re-centering participants on God's guidance and power as the ultimate source of leadership strength and vision.

In summary, Session 5 was pivotal in the leadership development journey, challenging leaders to step out of theory and into practice. Through fieldwork, ministry evaluation, and legacy planning, this session equips leaders to lead not just for the present but with the future in mind. The findings revealed that while participants already valued the concept of succession planning, the leadership sessions effectively deepened their understanding and slightly increased their commitment to mentorship. The increased self-reported knowledge and the small uptick in those willing to train others signal a positive trajectory. However, the data also highlights that cultural and structural barriers may still exist when it comes to translating knowledge into action. The relatively low percentage of respondents currently mentoring or expressing willingness to do so points to a need for additional support, encouragement, or systems that empower church members to step into leadership development roles confidently.

Session 6: Fostering Leadership Reproduction in Ministry

I discovered that Leadership reproduction is vital for sustaining any ministry or organization's health, growth, and mission. Week 6 focused on how ministries can intentionally foster a culture of developing future leaders by empowering current ones to mentor, train, and equip others. This involves both strategic planning and spiritual investment. The foundation for leadership reproduction lies in modeling a mindset of development. Senior leaders must first demonstrate a commitment to mentoring and discipling others. A formal mentorship program can provide structure, while promoting a servant leadership philosophy reinforces the idea that leadership is about service and multiplication. Equipping future leaders involves creating opportunities for growth through hands-on experience, leadership training, and delegation. By giving aspiring leaders chances to lead small groups or ministry projects, they can build both competence and confidence. Recognizing and rewarding leadership growth also plays a key role in reinforcing this culture.

Leadership development must be integrated into the ministry's core goals and values. It should not be an add-on but a central part of the organization's mission. Encouraging peer mentoring, where leaders at various levels challenge and support each other, can create a self-sustaining leadership pipeline. All of this should be covered in prayer, with spiritual investment in future leaders to ensure they are grounded in faith.

To ensure a pipeline of capable future leaders, ministries must implement structured processes for identifying and nurturing talent. This begins with a leadership identification process based on spiritual maturity, character, and servant-heartedness. Spiritual gifts and strengths assessments can help align individuals with the roles that best suit their God-

given talents. Leaders must also be encouraged to take responsibility for their own growth through discipleship, study, and active participation. A comprehensive development program—including training sessions, mentorship, and real ministry experience—can prepare individuals for leadership roles. Rotational roles and leadership retreats further broaden experience and spiritual depth. Establishing a system of regular evaluation and feedback helps refine leadership capabilities. Ministries should also define a clear pathway from service roles to leadership positions, giving clarity and purpose to the process. As always, prayer and spiritual equipping remain foundational elements in developing capable and Christ-centered leaders.

The teaching reinforced that Leadership reproduction is not just about filling roles; it's about long-term sustainability and mission continuity. By constantly raising new leaders, ministries maintain a strong leadership pipeline that prevents disruption during transitions and ensures alignment with the original vision and values. This culture of multiplication supports ongoing growth, encourages innovation, and increases capacity for ministry impact. It also reduces burnout among current leaders, as responsibilities are more widely shared. Moreover, it builds a legacy of servant leadership, where leaders model humility, collaboration, and a heart for others. New leaders bring fresh ideas and energy, helping the ministry adapt to changing contexts while preserving its core purpose. This approach also promotes unity and teamwork, as individuals grow together in leadership. Ultimately, leadership reproduction glorifies God by fulfilling the Great Commission—disciples making disciples who lead others in faith and service. In conclusion**,** a ministry can thrive across generations by embedding leadership development into its DNA. Structured mentorship, intentional training, hands-on experience, and spiritual grounding

are key strategies that ensure the continual growth of leaders and the lasting impact of the organization's mission.

Summary Of Learning

Week 1 Reflection: What is a Succession Plan?

The focused journaling provided much of what the participants learned from every session. The first session on biblical succession planning was an impactful and thought-provoking experience for all participants. It focused on understanding the principles of leadership succession from a biblical perspective, emphasizing the importance of passing down leadership roles intentionally and strategically to ensure the church's longevity and vitality. Drawing heavily from the example of Moses and Joshua, the session illustrated how deliberate preparation of future leaders was not only practical but also scriptural. This foundational concept was reinforced with other biblical models such as Jesus and the apostles, Elijah and Elisha, and Paul with Timothy and Titus.

Participants expressed a strong sense of clarity about what a biblical succession plan entails—transferring leadership from one spiritually mature and qualified individual to another. Many acknowledged that while their churches may have some degree of succession planning in place, it is often limited to key positions such as the pastorate. There was a unanimous consensus that succession planning must extend to every ministry within the church if it is to continue thriving across generations. Without such a plan, the church risks stagnation or decline when current leaders step aside.

One key takeaway highlighted by several participants was the spiritual intentionality shown by Moses, who, despite being disqualified from entering the Promised Land, remained obedient in preparing Joshua for future leadership. This underscored the urgency for current leaders to train others not just for continuity, but in faithful obedience to God's will. The reflection also acknowledged the necessity of cultivating leadership early, mentoring with vision, and ensuring that successors are spiritually grounded and aligned with God's purposes.

Personal testimonies brought added depth to the session. Some leaders admitted to rising in leadership without formal mentoring, relying instead on observation—both of positive examples and what not to do. This only deepened their desire to implement intentional mentoring practices for the next generation, so that emerging leaders have the guidance and support they themselves lacked. Participants also stressed the need for clear succession goals, spiritual maturity, accountability, and consistent growth among those selected for leadership development.

In reflecting on the content and presentation, participants found the session highly valuable. The material helped many apply the principles to their own ministries, and some even felt personally spoken to through the teaching. It reignited a commitment among leaders to be more intentional in relationship building, mentoring, and training successors. They noted that preparing leaders should begin well before the need arises, rather than in times of crisis or transition. Overall, the session encouraged leaders to approach succession with a mindset of spiritual stewardship, rather than just organizational maintenance.

Responses to Reflection Questions

Q 1: What did you learn from the session?

Participants learned that a biblical succession plan is both necessary and non-negotiable for effective ministry. Through numerous scriptural examples, they were reminded that leadership transition is part of God's design for sustaining His work on earth. They emphasized that succession planning should be deliberate, spiritual, and integrated into every level of church ministry. Leaders must train others with passion, spiritual accountability, and a clear vision for God's work. They also realized the importance of humility and preparation in their own roles as mentors and trainers.

Q 2: How helpful was the content and presentation to you as a current leader?

The session received an overwhelmingly positive response, with an average score of 4.79 out of 5. Nearly every participant rated the content a 5, indicating that they found it highly beneficial to their roles as current leaders. They appreciated the teaching's clarity, biblical foundation, and practical application. The session was seen as informative and empowering, motivating leaders to act immediately in mentoring and planning for the future.

Q 3: How helpful was the content material and presentation to you as a future leader?

The session received an overwhelmingly positive response, with an average score of 4.70 out of 5. Nearly every participant rated the content a 5, indicating that they found it highly beneficial to their roles as future leaders.

Week 2 Reflection: Identifying Key Positions

The second week of focused journaling centered on the foundational principles required for effective and enduring ministry leadership. One of the dominant themes was the significance of having a firm foundation rooted in biblical principles, values, and a clear vision. Participants repeatedly emphasized that a strong foundation is essential for personal leadership and sustaining church structures and ministries. Participants acknowledged that leadership must begin with integrity, strength, and clarity of purpose. Just as a building cannot stand without a strong base, neither can a ministry thrive without a solid spiritual and organizational foundation. The idea of Christ as the chief cornerstone became a powerful metaphor throughout the session, emphasizing that all aspects of leadership should align with Jesus' teachings and example. A significant takeaway was the understanding that successful leadership is not a solo journey. It requires teamwork, humility, and accountability. Several participants expressed how enlightening it was to recognize the importance of listening to others, sharing responsibilities, and fostering a collaborative environment where everyone's contributions are valued. The leader's role is not to dominate, but to inspire, model godliness, and lift others into their potential roles.

Another key concept was the importance of succession planning. Participants reflected on the need for the current leadership to mentor and prepare future leaders intentionally. The biblical examples discussed reinforced the need for structured plans to ensure continuity and growth within the church. Participants shared how this inspired them to be more active in developing others, understanding that leadership extends beyond the present moment and into future generations.

The content also highlighted the necessity of adaptability in leadership. Participants noted that clear goals and strong principles must be balanced with the flexibility to meet the changing needs of the congregation and ministry environment. This dynamic approach ensures that leadership remains effective while staying rooted in God's purpose. On a more personal note, participants described feeling reaffirmed and encouraged by the session. The analogy of building a house resonated deeply. Leaders agreed they must continuously assess their own spiritual and emotional foundation, resisting the temptation to rely solely on their own strength. Several individuals expressed a renewed desire to return to the basics of ministry leadership, refocusing on God's Word as the source of guidance, endurance, and strength.

In response to the first and second questions—how helpful the content was to current and future leaders—participants overwhelmingly rated the session with high scores. The average rating was 4.95 out of 5 for both categories, indicating strong approval and appreciation for the material's depth, relevance, and impact. The insights gained were seen as both practically applicable and spiritually enriching. Lastly, participants were struck by the reminder that ministry is not about personal gain or recognition. Instead, it is about fulfilling the mission that God has established. Leaders are called to serve with integrity, empower others, and ensure that everything within the church points back to Christ as the foundation and guide.

Week 3 Reflection: Assessing Potential Talent

The Week 3 session on assessing potential talent in ministry provided profound insights into the heart of leadership, particularly within the church. The central theme—

prioritizing character over competency—resonated deeply with participants and highlighted a critical model for shaping future leaders. A significant takeaway was the understanding that while competency reflects what someone can do, character reveals who they are. Several participants noted that skills may diminish over time, but character, when appropriately cultivated, endures and matures. Many participants expressed a personal realization that their character must be their strongest attribute, as it aligns more with God's desire for them than mere ability. This shift in perspective is pivotal, especially in a culture that often rewards performance over integrity. Jesus' leadership model served as the foundation of this session's teaching. It was repeatedly emphasized that Jesus did not choose the most qualified or accomplished individuals by worldly standards. Instead, He selected those with teachable spirits, open hearts, and a willingness to follow. This approach reinforced the truth that God values faithfulness and humility over resumes and credentials.

Participants were reminded that Jesus taught through real-life examples and stories, showing that leadership is a process grounded in growth, compassion, and service. A recurring theme in participant responses was the need for leaders whose lives reflect spiritual maturity and accountability. One person rightly observed that teaching or leading others in spiritual growth is nearly impossible if the leader themselves has not embodied those same principles. This underscored the importance of not only assessing leadership potential but nurturing it intentionally through discipleship and spiritual formation.

The session also opened their eyes to the idea that the church must proactively identify potential talent. While character must be the guiding force, competency still has a place. Several reflections acknowledged that both elements should walk in harmony—character

as the foundation, and competency as the tool. This balance allows leaders to be both spiritually grounded and practically effective. As one participant put it, potential talent is "nourished by the Spirit of God, led by the Spirit, taught by the Spirit, and endorsed by the Spirit." This powerful statement illustrates the holistic approach needed to shape Kingdom-minded leaders. Another deeply impactful takeaway was the idea that the selection and development of leaders should focus on what people can become, not merely who they are right now. This growth-centered approach mirrors the way Jesus viewed His disciples—not for their current state, but for their future potential. It challenges us to see through the lens of grace and spiritual foresight, which is essential for a church that seeks to raise up the next generation of impactful leaders.

Quantitatively, the content of the session was overwhelmingly well-received. With an average rating of 4.91 out of 5 from both current and future leaders, it's evident that the teaching was not only informative but also transformative. It provided both spiritual and practical insights that participants found immediately relevant and beneficial. In summary, Week 3 reaffirmed that leadership in the church must be built on the bedrock of godly character. Competency may open doors, but only character keeps them open in a manner that honors God. As we look toward cultivating future leaders, we must follow the example of Christ—calling, developing, and trusting those who are faithful, humble, and Spirit-led. This session laid the groundwork for a leadership model that seeks to grow churches and transform lives.

Week 4 Reflection: Accelerating Successor Development

Week 4 of our focused journaling on successor development brought clarity and momentum to our understanding of ministry leadership. As one participant observed, the

lessons and methodologies are beginning to fall into place, making the overall process feel more cohesive and impactful. This session highlighted the essential elements of building and sustaining leadership within the church, reinforcing that leadership development is both spiritual and strategic. One of the key takeaways from this session was the need for a multi-faceted approach to developing future leaders. Participants emphasized that there is no one-size-fits-all method. Strategic planning, leadership pipelines, mentoring, coaching, job shadowing, and promoting innovation were all mentioned as necessary tools to prepare successors. The diversity of these methods speaks to the uniqueness of each individual's learning style and the complexity of preparing leaders to serve in both present and future roles.

A strong theme throughout the reflections was the importance of character over competency. While skills and qualifications matter, the heart of a leader, demonstrated through devotion, humility, and commitment to biblical values, is paramount. As one participant noted, we are all God's property, and this truth should shape our understanding of leadership. Our character must reflect Christ, and our actions should aim to build up the body of Christ through intentional discipleship, service, and love. The lesson also reminded us of the early church's example in Acts 2:42-47, where believers were devoted to the apostles' teaching, fellowship, the breaking of bread, and prayer. This communal model was described as foundational for fostering a thriving Christian community. Participants noted that this type of unity should be the cornerstone of any church's leadership strategy based on mutual respect, shared beliefs, and active service. A leadership community rooted in such principles will be strong and sustainable.

The “four Ps” of Purpose, People, Property, and Program were introduced as a framework for shaping future leaders. These four elements create a balanced ministry model that keeps God’s mission central. Purpose gives direction, People represent those called and equipped, Property symbolizes stewardship, and Program outlines the structure to carry it all out. When all four are aligned, ministry becomes more effective, and successor development becomes more intentional.

Another practical insight from the session was the need for structured training, real-time ministry exposure, and ongoing feedback. Participants recognized the value of hands-on experience and suggested implementing progress tracking through quarterly reports to ensure accountability and growth. Equipping future leaders requires not just information but also opportunities to apply what they’ve learned and reflect on their experiences. In response to the questions about the helpfulness of the content and presentation, the feedback was overwhelmingly positive.

As current leaders, participants consistently rated the material highly, with most giving it a 4.83 out of 5. Similarly, as future leaders, most gave it a 4.91 out of 5. The content was perceived as extremely valuable, reflecting a high level of engagement and appreciation for the training provided.

In conclusion, Week 4 deepened our understanding of what it takes to shape leaders who are spiritually grounded, relationally connected, and strategically prepared. By combining biblical principles with practical strategies, this session equipped us to better identify, develop, and support those God calls to lead next. The journey of leadership is ongoing, but with intentional effort and God-honoring focus, we can build a legacy of strong, faithful leaders for generations to come.

Week 5 Reflection: Ministry Fieldwork

Week 5 of our focused journaling on ministry fieldwork awakened the participants in such a miraculous way. An overwhelming majority of participants saw the great need for learning, being trained, and producing hands-on scenarios, which served as confidence builders for future leaders. The leaders had an opportunity to unpack their strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and the challenges that are associated with the churches' ministries. Several of the newer and incoming leaders stated that this session gave a clearer picture, a blueprint, and provided a road map to help them succeed with developing leaders and leading their ministries. Several of the older and current leaders learned how important it is to make connections with the members within their ministries and to begin training them, giving them meaningful assignments and developing the future leaders' character to ensure that the integrity and the spirit of the ministry are in line with biblical Christian practices. Others stated that it is essential to have continual conversations and collaborations amongst leaders for the leadership to stay on one accord, working under biblical principles and following pastoral leadership. Many participants also stated that they must be more intentional about partnering and sharing workload. Otherwise, no individual will want to become a leader. They felt this was a way to ensure everyone has ownership and would graciously accept the leadership mantles if they were already involved in the current work. Another insight the leaders stated in this reflection was that of making sure that there are tangible procedures protocols of past and current ministries so that the incoming leadership and future leaders will not only have spoken word but written word as well. In response to a well-received session, these current and future

leaders gave high marks on the strength of the presentation and the materials they were given. They overwhelmingly rated the material highly, with most giving it a 4.87 out of 5.

The content was perceived as extremely valuable, reflecting high engagement and appreciation for the training provided.

Week 6 Reflection: Leadership Reproduction and S.W.O.T Analysis

In our concluding session, a vast majority of the leaders expressed that the opening story about "the pond," which dealt with passing on the responsibilities and upkeep of a pond, stocking it, and making sure that it is cultivated, resonated with them in such a way that none of them wanted the church to dry up because there's no pipeline or leadership development within their congregation.

The other takeaway from the leadership participants was that they need to be more intentional in addressing the current strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. Several participants stated that there are more opportunities for leadership development and growth then we actually utilize currently and look forward to making budget recommendations for conferences and any other leadership development programs that will help the church achieve its goal. One of the new leaders noted how overwhelming some of the work within a church seems to be. They stated that it can be intimidating. However, they joyfully add it to their comments by being willing to be a committed leader and help develop and mentor future leaders. Another common sentiment amongst the leadership participants was that every member matters and that we are in this together therefore we must work together and looks forward to seeing a ministry succession plan put in place within our church. Several other members also stated that the workload cannot all be thrust

upon the pastor, the church staff, the deacons and the trustees but must embody every leader at every level making sure that these principles and this work reaches every member in the church. This final session's average rating was 4.95 out of 5 for both categories, indicating strong approval and appreciation for the material's depth, relevance, and impact.

Conclusion

Based upon my initial problem statement, which stated that "the problem at Southern Missionary Baptist Church is that there is no succession plan in place for ministry leadership" and in conjunction with my hypothesis which said "if the senior pastor and existing leadership participate in a seminar about leadership succession, then they will be equipped to identify the future leadership needs of the ministry context, it is clear that all aspects of this project identify not the outlined problem but through this six-week training program which was designed primarily to bring awareness to the issue of no succession model or plan was successfully accomplished by the examination of the data, specifically the pre-and post-surveys, group discussions, focused journaling, fieldwork (Ministry) assignments, small group and individual interviews, the leadership participants in the study not only aware of a succession plan or model but they strongly agree with developing and implementing one for the church's longevity and well-being. The participants also have biblical, historical, theological, and social interdisciplinary examples and models. Therefore, this six-week training and seminar, "A Ministry Model for Shaping Future Leaders", affirms and proves the stated hypothesis.

For the purposes and nature of this design doctoral program, I chose to use qualitative analysis to gauge the effectiveness of the hypothesis, training program, and

seminar. Through the aforementioned collection methods, I was able to monitor the participants' progress as it applied to awareness of a succession model or plan. In the pre- and post-survey areas, it was clear to see a noticeable change in understanding of the subject matter and affirmation of the need for such a plan. It was also eye opening to see that many benefited from other people grooming them to be the leaders that they are today while yet not Being initially eager to develop other individuals In the same fashion that they were developed.

I was not shocked about the participants knowledge of the topic and the subjects that were discussed. However, I was surprised that even though they knew that a plan is needed, It did not motivate them to want to provide hands-on development and training for future leaders actively. This feeling that they had ultimately got better as the sessions and teaching persisted assuring me of hope that this is something that can take place And it's not just pastor lead but also assisted by the leadership teams in order to support such a great and need it work within the church. All of the participants were grateful and felt honored to be a part of this research project. I was also surprised that for this group of participants, the six-week model was not overly taxing, as almost all of the participants made every session and completed their tasks and assignments with great diligence and passion towards producing an outcome that would benefit the entire church body. I also gained a deeper knowledge of the participants through the interviews and personal discussions. This will prompt me to find ways to add these discussions to my daily workload, to continue developing a stronger relationship with them as we work to make the church better for all.

APPENDIX A

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Informed Consent Form

Dan W. Larkin, Jr
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DLarkin1@united.edu
(513) 484-4285

Re: A Ministry Model for Shaping Future Leaders (Seminars)

Dear Invitee,
My name is Dan W. Larkin, Jr., and I am a doctoral student at United Theological Seminary. I am working with the Strategic Leadership for Black Congregations cohort led by Dr. Lance Watson and Dr. William Curtis. I kindly invite you to participate in my doctoral project, "A Ministry Model for Shaping Future Leaders." The project intends to inform current and future leaders of the importance of a Biblical model for leadership succession that a church should have to have longevity and continue to grow and thrive with strong leadership without interruption. The project involves participating in six small sessions.

You are being asked to take part in a research study. Before you decide to participate in this study, it is important that you understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please read the following information carefully.

Thank you for considering participation in our study. Should you decide to participate, the following section outlines your procedures. Upon your consent to participate, you will:

1. Initial Assessment: Each participant will complete a brief presurvey to gather background information, which will take approximately 10-15 minutes. This assessment will cover topics
such as what you may or may not know about leadership succession planning and the like.

2. Journaling: You will then engage in the main activities of the discipleship training, which include weekly small group engagement sessions across a six-week time period. You will be provided a journal to make weekly reflections regarding your experience(s) and what you've gleaned from participating in the activities. Each session will take approximately one hour, and I will guide you. I will collect the writing and discussions, and each participant will use a four-digit code to turn in the information, ensuring the confidentiality of your information.

3. Post Surveys: You will be asked to complete a post-survey after the last main session has concluded. These will help us understand the impact of the training and the potential outcomes of the project.

4. Interviews: At the end of your participation, I will conduct a brief interview regarding your experience in this study and provide a debriefing session where you can ask questions. Additionally, I will share more about the purpose and expected outcomes of the study.

Your total time commitment is expected to be approximately eight to ten hours. Please note that you can ask questions at any time during the study. You are free to withdraw from the study at any point without penalty.

Risk Statement: Participation in this study may involve certain risks and discomforts, which we have outlined below:

1. Psychological Risks: Some questions or activities may make you feel uncomfortable or distressed. You may discuss sensitive topics that could evoke strong emotions.

2. Social Risks: There is a minimal risk that confidentiality could be breached, which might lead to social stigma or stress.

3. Privacy Risks: Despite our rigorous confidentiality protocols, there is always a minimal risk of information leakage when data is shared or stored. We strive to minimize these risks by implementing stringent protocols and procedures. Your comfort and safety are our top priorities, and you will have access to support and resources should you experience any distress or discomfort during the study. Please understand that you have the right to withdraw from the study at any point without any penalty. It is important to consider these potential risks before agreeing to participate. If you have any questions or concerns about the risks associated with the study, please feel free to discuss them with us before giving your consent.

Benefits
Participation in this study may or may not provide you with direct benefits. However, your involvement is expected to contribute valuable information that could reshape how the leadership can more effectively engage church-wide spiritual growth opportunities. Your participation will likely help future leaders and churches facing similar issues or conditions by advancing knowledge in leadership succession. This research could lead to better strategies and levels of engagement that could improve the impact of the church on and its mission field.

Please note that this study is not designed to treat or diagnose any existing conditions you may have. If, during the course of the study, we discover anything that may be beneficial or of interest to your health or well-being, we will inform you accordingly.

Voluntariness of Participation
Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You are free to choose whether to participate in this study. We ask that you please take time to make your decision. No benefits will be withheld from you if you decide not to participate. You are also free to withdraw from the study at any stage without any penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. Your decision regarding participation will not affect your current or future relations with Southern Baptist Church or its leadership team.

Confidentiality Statement
We respect your privacy and are committed to protecting the confidentiality of your personal and
research-related information. All data collected during this study will be stored securely and will only be accessible to the research team. Identifiable information such as your name, contact details, and other personal identifiers will be separated from your responses and stored independently under a unique code to ensure your anonymity. Your information will be used exclusively for research purposes and will not be shared with any third parties without your explicit consent except as required by law. All results reported will be aggregated or presented in such a way that individuals cannot be identified.

If you have any questions about confidentiality or how we will use your information, please feel free to ask.

Your participation is greatly valued, and we thank you for your trust. Your information will remain confidential throughout the entire process and afterward. Should you feel the need to leave this group study at any time, please do so.

Consent:
I have read and understand the provided information and have had the opportunity to ask questions. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I can withdraw at any time without giving a reason or cost. I understand that I will be given a copy of this consent form. If you consent to participate in this study, please return the form by February 5, 2025.

You have read and understand the above, and your signature is an expression of your understanding and willingness to participate.

I voluntarily agree to take part in this study.

_____
Participant's Name and Date:

_____
Investigator's Signature and Date:

APPENDIX B

PRE-PROJECT SURVEY

A Ministry Model for Shaping Future Leaders

Pre-project questions

Folder # _____

On a scale of 1 being the lowest and 5 being the highest, what is your understanding of a leadership succession plan? _____

On a scale of 1 being the lowest and 5 being the highest, how important is a succession plan for a church? _____

Before becoming a leader, were you trained/mentored by a former leader in this church? Yes or no _____

Are you currently training/mentoring someone to be a leader? Yes or no

APPENDIX C

POST-PROJECT SURVEY

A Ministry Model for Shaping Future Leaders

Post-project questions

Folder # _____

On a scale of 1 being the lowest and 5 being the highest, what is your understanding of a leadership succession plan? _____

On a scale of 1 being the lowest and 5 being the highest, how important is a succession plan for a church? _____

Based upon your completion of these sessions, do you believe that the church needs to implement a leadership succession plan?
yes____ or no _____

Will you train/mentor someone to be a future leader? yes _____ or no _____

APPENDIX D

INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

A Ministry Model for Shaping Future Leaders
Interview Questions

1. How long have you been in leadership here at the church?

2. Share your leadership journey here at the church.

3. What do you enjoy about leadership?

4. What are the challenges in leadership?

5. Do you believe the church needs a leadership succession plan or model? Why or why not?

APPENDIX E

FOCUSED JOURNALING QUESTIONS

A Ministry Model for Shaping Future Leaders
Focused Journaling
Weeks 1-5

Week _____

1. Write a 1 1/2 page reflection on the learning outcomes from today's session. (see agenda for each week's title)

2. On a scale of 1 being the lowest and 5 being the highest, how helpful was the content material and presentation beneficial to you as a current leader?

3. On a scale of 1 being the lowest and 5 being the highest, how helpful was the content material and presentation beneficial to you as a future leader?

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